Prophecy and Inspiration

A Commentary on the Summa Theologica
II-II, Questions 171-178

by

PAUL SYNAVE, O. P. (†) and PIERRE BENOIT, O. P.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD 7

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION . . . 13

PART I: Explanatory Notes on *Summa Theologica* II-II, qq. 171-178 . . 15

PART II: Notes on Thomistic Doctrine. . 61

A) The Gift of Prophecy according to St. Thomas 61

B) Scriptural Inspiration . . . 84

APPENDIX 169

BIBLIOGRAPHY 171

ANALYTICAL INDEX. 175

OUTLINE 185

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FOREWORD

In Part II of the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas considers man's return toward God. After describing the goal of this journey and the general principles of natural and supernatural psychology which must direct man's steps (I-II), he makes a detailed study of the various means which men have for traveling along this road (II-II). He first discusses those means which are the property of all Christians, *sc.*, the theological and moral virtues (qq. 1-170), and then those which are given only to some and which correspond to special vocations (qq. 171-189). The latter class includes: (a) particular gifts (called "charisms," after the practice of St. Paul, v.g. 1 Cor 12: 4 ff.) which are conferred on certain individuals for the benefit of the human community (qq. 171-178); (b) various ways of devoting oneself to the service of God, *sc.*, the active life and the contemplative life (qq. 179-182); and (c) various offices which must be filled in the Mystical Body, and which lead to different degrees of perfection (qq. 183-189). In the present volume we shall study the first of these three categories.

The common element which unifies the *charisms* is the fact that they are all designed to assure the effective communication of divine Revelation to men through the mediation of certain privileged persons on whom these gifts are conferred. This mission is primarily of the intellectual order: it is concerned with proposing to human minds a message which contains the thoughts and purposes of God.

Thus the messenger first of all receives a gift of knowledge: his mind is enlightened from above in order to make him perceive with divine clarity the words which he is to communicate to other men on God's behalf. This is the *gift of prophecy* (qq. 171-175). And yet, important as it is, this interior illumination is not enough; the prophet receives his message only to transmit it to others, and natural powers of expression are inadequate for this supernatural mission. His mind has been assisted by a divine grace; similar help must be given to his tongue. To this end he will receive the *gift of tongues* and the *gift of speech* (qq. 176-177). Finally, in order that men may believe in the supernatural character of his words and accept them with faith and submission, God will place in his hands the power of producing "signs" which will certify the divine origin of his mission. This power is the *gift of miracles* (q. 178).

Here we have all the gratuitous favors which assure and guarantee the divine process of Revelation. Their importance is evident, for on them depends the exalted character of the message which God has destined for men — its integrity, its fruitfulness, its persuasive power, and, above all, its truth. These gifts affect the very source of the "revealed data" which are offered to the faith of believers, and which come to them through the twofold channel of Scripture and Tradition. It is because the ministers of Revelation are endowed with these charisms that the Church is sure she possesses through these two fonts the authentic word of God.

On the other hand, we must remember that while the charismatic gifts marvelously elevate the thoughts, words, and deeds of these living instruments of the Holy Spirit, they do not make them cease to be men, with all the limitations which the human condition necessarily implies. For example, the gift of prophecy, which gives supernatural clarity and certitude to their knowledge, is nevertheless so adapted to their concrete processes that the divine truth becomes clothed with their individual ideas, images, and feelings. This fact accounts for the human, concrete, and temporal determinations which are found in the inspired Scriptures.

Modern discoveries and advances in criticism, by resurrecting before our eyes the historical surroundings in which the Bible was born, have made us more conscious of these human factors. Some difficult problems have in fact arisen when scholars, making use of

these profane sources of information, have thought that they detected in the Sacred Books, not only limitations and omissions, but even contradictions and errors. This occasioned the great biblical crisis of modern times. While Rationalist exegesis was unhesitatingly abandoning the traditional belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture, and saw in the Bible nothing more than a religious book of purely human origin, Catholic theology attempted to solve these difficulties through a better understanding of the true nature of biblical inspiration and of the guarantee of inerrancy.

To achieve this understanding, recourse was had to the traditional doctrine of the Fathers and theologians. Among the latter, St. Thomas, with his treatise on *Prophecy*, holds a position of the first rank. In the Thomistic school many difficulties were cleared up, and gradually a body of opinion began to crystallize about his teaching. The Magisterium of the Church has itself recognized his great authority in this matter. Pius XII in his most recent Encyclical on biblical studies, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (Sept. 30, 1943), wrote as follows:

> It is worthy of special mention that Catholic theologians, following the teaching of the Holy Fathers and especially of the Angelic and Common Doctor, have examined and explained the nature and effects of biblical inspiration more exactly and more fully than was wont to be done in previous ages (*RSS*, no. 33; cf. *EB* [556]).

For this reason it seemed opportune in this commentary to advert to modern problems and to show how many valuable insights St. Thomas affords for a proper understanding of scriptural inspiration. Such inspiration, as we shall see, is not exactly the same as the charism of " prophecy " here treated by St. Thomas. But it is still a gift of the same order. The directive principles which the Master has laid down can, therefore, be fruitfully applied to the matter of scriptural inspiration, if care is taken to avoid all distortion by noting the differences between the two charisms and indicating the required accommodations.

This volume had been entrusted to Fr. Synave, O.P. Since his premature death prevented him from seeing it through, I agreed to finish his work. A feeling of grateful devotion to my former teacher encouraged me to undertake this task; in the same spirit I felt that I should discard nothing of what he had already written, but merely complete what he could not do.

The Translation had already been made; it needed only a last and slight revision. The Explanatory Notes had been finished in part; I completed some of them to the extent I deemed necessary. The following are my work: the last two paragraphs of Explanatory Note 15 and the entire Explanatory Notes 18, 24, 26, 35, 36, 46, 47, 50-52, 75, 77, and 80. Finally nothing of Appendix II had been written; for this I alone am responsible. Although it might be thought that this section, especially toward the end, gets somewhat away from the topic of " prophecy " by which it was occasioned, it seemed to me that the whole subject constitutes a single unit, and that the final conclusions—e.g., those concerning the " literary types " and the " senses of Scripture " are a necessary complement to the matter that precedes. The fruitfulness of St. Thomas's doctrine will also, I hope, be obvious. When his principles are carried out to their ultimate implications, it becomes clear that he is a very reliable guide for those seeking a path through the most concrete and pressing difficulties which confront the biblical scholar today.

Jerusalem, Feast of St. Jerome
Sept. 30, 1945

PIERRE BENOIT, O.P.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS — *Acta Apostolicae Sedis.*

DB — *Enchiridion Symbolorum.* Ed. 30; 1955.

EB — *Enchiridion Biblicum.* Ed. 1; 1927. Ed. 2; 1954. *

PL — *Patrologia Latina.* Ed. Migne.

RSS — *Rome and the Study of Scripture.* Ed. 5. St. Meinrad, Ind., 1953.

* References to the second edition are given in brackets.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

It was fifteen years ago that the original French edition of this book appeared. Since then my thought has been clarified, enriched, and likewise corrected on many points by useful criticism. I returned to the subject in a chapter in *Initiation Biblique*[1] and in some occasional papers.[2] I intend to do so again in the near future in two articles for the encyclopedia *Catholicisme* and, more fully, in a supplementary volume of *Bible de Jérusalem*. While these essays extend the lines of my research, they suppose the first presentation of my thought in the treatise *La Prophétie* which was written with my deceased teacher, Fr. P. Synave, O.P., in the light of St. Thomas following a deliberately theological and systematic method.

Hence, when Fr. G. S. Glanzman, S.J. suggested that I publish this treatise in an English translation, I readily and gratefully agreed to this wider circulation of a work which I consider still valid and which I have no intention of beginning over. I had only to make

[1] Ed. A. Robert & A. Tricot, *Initiation Biblique* (3rd ed., Tournai, 1954), pp. 6-45.

[2] " La Septante est-elle inspirée? " in *Vom Wort des Lebens* (Max Meinertz Festschrift) (Münster, 1951), pp. 41-49; " Note complémentaire sur l'inspiration, " *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), pp. 416-22; " Les analogies de l'inspiration scripturaire, " *Sacra Pagina*. Miscellanea Biblica Congressus Internationalis Catholici de Re Biblica, I (Gembloux, 1959) 86-99.

some adjustments, as the translators and editors invited me to do. I have modified or complemented my text in many places; the following are the most important: revision of the material on the relations between prophecy and faith (p. 75); clear recognition of instrumentality in the proper sense in the case of *scriptural* inspiration (pp. 80-81, 83, 118-19); clarification that one of the aims of the practical judgment, guided by scriptural inspiration, can be simply to transmit something to posterity, without implying teaching (p. 104 f.); substitution of " cognitive " inspiration for " prophetic " inspiration (pp. 109-111); new analysis of inspiration into " dramatic, " " prophetic " or " apostolic, " and " scriptural " (pp. 125-27); in the matter of inerrancy, some expressions have been polished (pp. 133, 135, and 137), older material has been reworked on pp. 140-142; correction of denial of the inspiration of the Septuagint (p. 146); revision of the terminology and classification of the senses of Scripture (pp. 147-51); proposal to revive the ancient tradition of an " ecclesiastical " inspiration (p. 165).

Finally the Bibliography has been brought up to date. It remains selective and can in no way claim to give a complete survey of the vast literature. It covers especially the question of inspiration, and not those of hermeneutics nor of canonicity which are treated only indirectly in this book.

PIERRE BENOIT, O.P.

PART I

Explanatory Notes

On *Summa Theologica*, II-II, qq. 171-178

EN [1]

Q. 171, *Prol.:* " Uno quidem... diversas gratias gratis datas. "

We use the term " charisms " to translate the Latin words *gratiae gratis datae*—literally, " graces given gratuitously. " In scholastic terminology, as is well known, *gratia gratis data* is contrasted with *gratia gratum faciens.* The latter renders its possessor pleasing to God, whereas the former is granted, not for the personal good of the subject who receives it, but for the general good. See I-II, q. 111, a. 1, and Note 45 in the French translation of Fr. Mulhard, O.P. (Paris, Editions de la Revue des Jeunes).

EN [2]

Ibid.: " Est autem attendendum circa gratias gratis datas... "

In the list of charisms given by St. Paul (1 Cor 12: 8-11) and followed here by St. Thomas, three pertain properly speaking to *knowledge:* " prophecy, " " faith, " and " the discerning of spirits "; four are connected with *speech:* " the word of wisdom, " " the word of knowledge, " " interpretation of speeches, " and " diverse kinds of tongues "; two concern *action:* " the grace of healing " and " the working of miracles. " [See Appendix.] But as Cajetan remarks, the " interpretation of speeches " requires a light, and both the " word of wisdom " and the " word of knowledge " involve cognition—

either that of wisdom *(sapientia)* or that of knowledge *(scientia)*. St. Thomas likewise, in his Prologue, reduces not only " faith " and " the discerning of spirits, " but also explicitly " the word of wisdom " and " the word of knowledge " to the knowledge properly so called of " prophecy. " " Interpretation of speeches, " considered precisely as interpretation, could also be classified under the heading of " prophecy. " This explains why St. Thomas in his treatise on *Prophecy* actually studies all the charisms of the cognitive order. Although " prophecy " held a rather subordinate rank in St. Paul's list, it occupies such an important position in St. Thomas's discussion because he is fundamentally thinking of this gift not in the Pauline sense but rather in the sense of the Old Testament, where it is actually treated as the great charism of knowledge and revelation.

EN [3]

Q. 171, *a.* 1 *c:* " Unde possunt dici prophetae a ' phanos '... "

St. Thomas shows a particular fondness for this etymology borrowed from St. Isidore of Seville: he cites it at the beginning of his commentary on Isaiah and in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 1. " Prophecy " is alleged to come from *pro* (" that which is afar ") and *phanos* (" an appearing "). But πρό is never used in the sense of πόρρω. πρό indicates a preference over something else; either a local preference, whence arise the basic meaning, " before " (with the idea of place), and the figurative meanings, " in defense of, " " in preference to, " " instead of, " " in the place of, " " in exchange for, " " for, " and " because of "; or a temporal preference, whence arises the basic meaning of " before " (with the idea of time). As regards the second part of the word προφήτης, it is derived not from φανός (φαίνειν), " an appearing, " but from φημί (φάναι), " to speak, " " to say. " The prophet, therefore, is one who speaks in the name and place of another, here in the name of the divinity who inspires and sends him. Thus the true etymological meaning of the term is: an interpreter of God. The meaning later attributed to it, " he who foretells the future, " is only a derived meaning; cf. Van den Oudenrijn, *De Prophetiae charismate in populo israelitico* (Rome, 1926), p. 4 ff.

EN [4]

Ibid.

This threefold conclusion of St. Thomas considerably broadens the meaning of the word "prophecy." Although prophecy implies first and foremost an act of knowledge, it also designates sometimes an utterance, and sometimes a miraculous proof or confirmation of that utterance. In short, "prophecy" serves, or can serve, to signify any of the charismatic gifts.

EN [5]

Ibid.: ad 5m.

St. Thomas distinguishes two phases in prophecy: (1) An elevation of the prophet's mind whereby the range of his intellect is extended so that it becomes capable of perceiving divine truths; here he reserves the word *inspiration* to designate this elevation, which is due to the action of the Holy Spirit. (2) The actual perception of the supernatural truths, for the sake of which the inspiration has been given; to this perception he assigns the term *revelation.*

Etymologically *inspiration* suggests the active intervention of the Holy Spirit *(in-spiratio);* revelation evokes the idea of a veil *(velamen)* which is removed *(re-velatio)*. Inspiration calls for revelation, and revelation presupposes inspiration; neither occurs without the other. Thus we have here a theological, as well as an etymological, justification for the classical definition of prophecy given by Cassiodorus: "prophetia dicitur esse *inspiratio vel revelatio.*" But, notwithstanding what Cajetan asserts in his *Commentary*, St. Thomas makes no appeal whatever to any impulse given to the will, as the objection would maintain. Everything takes place in the prophet's mind *(mens)*. When St. Thomas speaks of an elevation of the range of the mind *(intentio mentis)*, one should not understand it as referring to "intention" in the sense specified in the treatise on *Human Acts* (I-II, qq. 6-21). There the term *intentio* does signify an act of the will, but here it is rather a question of the range of the mind as a whole.

EN [6]

Q. 171, *a.* 2: " Utrum prophetia sit habitus. "

The term *habitus*, as is well known, has no equivalent in English. The word " habit " is a poor translation, for the Latin *habitus* signifies a permanent quality of our faculties, no matter how acquired. The *habitus* enables us to perform acts in a connatural way, with speed, security, and delight. One who possesses a *habitus* exercises it at his good pleasure, when and as he wills. The title of the article might be translated: Does prophecy exist in a habitual state in the prophet? But even this translation is inexact, and thus it seems better to keep the term *habitus* in the technical sense explained above.

EN [7]

Ibid., c: " Et hujus ratio est... lumen manifestatur. "

As St. Thomas observes in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 1, the stability of our knowledge comes from the fact that we are able to reduce it to its first principles. So long as we are unable to effect this reduction, our knowledge of truth in a given order is unstable and insecure; at best it takes on in our minds some sort of probability. " Quamdiu enim non fit resolutio cognitorum in sua principia, cognitio non firmatur in uno, sed apprehendit ea quae cognoscit secundum probabilitatem quamdam utpote ab aliis dicta. " The intellectual light which perfects the mind by inhering as a permanent and perfect form gives it this stability and security, for it enables one to reduce everything to a single principle which illuminates all the conclusions by its own evidence.

Cajetan (*Comm.* n. III) stresses the two adjectives which St. Thomas uses here: an intellectual light which inheres as a *permanent* and *perfect* form.

(1) A *permanent* form is not simply a form which lasts or remains: that is a mere question of fact. A permanent form is one which of itself, in its mode of being, inheres like those forms which depend upon their efficient cause for their coming-into-being but not for their continued existence. Air, for example, " remains " bright as long as the source of its light remains in place. This is a fact; yet

that brightness is never in the air as a permanent form. Hence forms which are by their nature permanent are specifically different from those which are by their nature transitory. Further, it is possible for a form which is of itself permanent to be present accidentally *(per accidens)* in a transitory way. Thus, for example, the light of glory, which is a permanent form in the blessed, can exist in a transitory fashion in St. Paul or in Moses.

(2) A *perfect* form is one which has attained its final stage of evolution in its own order. The embryonic forms of an animal, for example, are not perfect forms. Only a form which enables the animal to perform its proper functions, those of sensation, would be perfect. In the intellectual order, a perfect form is one which gives vision. This criterion excludes the light of faith *(lumen fidei)*, which, although a permanent form, does not cause one to see. It does not give evidence for the truths of faith. Properly speaking, the light of faith is not even a purely intellectual light; it is a light of the intellect as moved by the will. Here we have an extended meaning of " intellectual light "; for faith enlightens the intellect not within its own proper limits, but insofar as it is subject to something else, namely, the will.

Cajetan adds (*Comm.*, n. V) that the light of faith does not cause one to see either the principles or the conclusions, but a limited facet, that of credibility, which remains extrinsic to the revealed truths which we believe.

This last explanation of Cajetan is based on a reply *(ad 4m eorum quae sunt in contrarium)* in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 1.

EN [8]

Ibid., ad 2m; " Ad secundum dicendum. ,,, iterato illustretur. "

In the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 1), St. Thomas grants that this aptitude *(habilitas)* once again to receive divine inspiration may be called a *habitus*. He is obviously influenced by Avicenna, as he explicitly states: " Avicenna writes [in the sixth book of his *De Naturalibus*] that the habits *(habitus)* of the sciences are nothing but certain aptitudes *(habilitates)* of our soul to receive the illumination of the active intellect and the intelligible representations flowing from it into our soul. " Nevertheless, St. Thomas adds with his usual

formal precision: " However, it cannot properly be called *habitus*, but an aptitude *(habilitas)* or disposition *(dispositio quaedam)* by reason of which one is called a prophet even when he is not actually being inspired. "

EN [9]

Ibid., ad 3m.

An act which in its substance surpasses man's faculties is one which exceeds those faculties by its physical essence. An act which surpasses man's faculties only in its mode exceeds them merely because of some moral condition. Man can love God, for example, by his natural powers, but he cannot love him in a meritorious way except by infused charity. Among those acts which in their substance surpass human nature, some are absolutely incommunicable, such as to create; others, such as to raise the dead or to stop the sun, are not actually communicated to man except as a result of his prayer or desire *(deprecative seu optative);* others, finally, are as a matter of fact communicated to men, such as to see God. In this last case the act in its physical essence may be said to surpass the faculties of human nature and of any other creature, and to be connatural to God alone; but, once the human faculties have been elevated by a divine gift, the act in its very substance really pertains to man: it is a *vital* act, proceeding from an intrinsic principle of life, even though this intellectual life is one which has been elevated by a gift, whether a habitual gift as will be the case in heaven, or even a transitory gift as in the case of prophecy (Cajetan, *Comm.*, nn. VI-VIII).

EN [10]

Q. 171, a. 3 c.

In order to ascertain what can be the object of prophecy, St. Thomas in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 2) reasons as follows:

> In all things which are ordained to an end, the material object is determined according to the exigency of the end, as is clear in the *Physics* [Bk. II]. But the gift of prophecy is given for the use of the Church, as is clear from I Corinthians [12: 7], " And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit . . . " Therefore,

all those things the knowledge of which can be useful for salvation are the matter of prophecy, whether they are past, future, or eternal, or necessary, or contingent. But those things which cannot pertain to salvation are outside the matter of prophecy. Hence, Augustine writes [*De Genesi ad litteram*, II, 9], " Although our sacred authors knew what shape heaven is, [the Spirit] wants to speak through them only what is useful for salvation. " And to the Gospel of St. John [16: 13], " But when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth, " the *Gloss* adds, " necessary for salvation. " Moreover I say necessary for salvation, whether they are necessary for instruction in the faith or for the formation of morals. But many of the things which are proved in the sciences can be useful for this, as, for instance, that the intellect is incorruptible, and also those things which when considered in creatures lead to admiration of the divine wisdom and power. Hence, we find that mention of these is made in Holy Scripture.

EN [11]

Ibid., ad 2m.

Concerning this answer to the second difficulty Cajetan writes:

Note with the greatest care the difference between *faith* and *prophecy*. Faith gives, not knowledge of the things which one believes, but an assent to that which is learned from others, that is, at least from the divine Persons. Prophecy, on the contrary, gives knowledge.

At this point there arises a question which we should not overlook: is the knowledge denied to faith and attributed to prophecy evidential knowledge? On the one hand, it seems that we are dealing with evidential knowledge. But on the other hand, can one say that the prophets had evident knowledge of the Holy Trinity without having seen the divine essence? This same remark might be made about the Incarnation of the Word, etc.

To this question, a reply will be given in article 5, in which the certitude of prophetic knowledge is treated. [See Explanatory Note 15.]

EN [12]

Ibid., ad 3m.

This reply of St. Thomas is one of the most typical in his treatise on *Prophecy*. He has shown, first, that prophecy involves inspiration

from the Holy Spirit (a. 1, ad 4m), i.e., an impulse which elevates the range of the human mind and, secondly, that this inspiration is given only in a transitory fashion, not as a habitual state (a. 2). Now he specifies that this passing gift is a light which constitutes the formal element of prophecy and gives it its specific unity notwithstanding the diversity of the objects of prophecy. Cajetan calls the reader's attention to the fact that this reply appears to conflict with q. 174, a. 1; but it seems too categorical and too expressive of St. Thomas's doctrine for us not to regard it as a definitive judgment on the part of the Master.

EN [13]

Q. 171, *a.* 4 *c:* " Respondeo dicendum quod... et alia non cognosci. "

Here we have in summary form the principle which accounts for the unity of all the moral virtues in prudence and of all the supernatural infused virtues in charity. This principle likewise governs the unity of knowledge. Each individual can escape dissipation in his personal life only by adhering to some single principle which assembles all his energies and enlists them in the service of an ideal, the focal point of man's activity, on whatever level it takes place.

EN [14]

Ibid., ad 2m: " Ad secundum dicendum... in genere divinae revelationis. "

This statement of St. Thomas should be kept in mind in connection with the general classification of prophecy. Divine revelation is considered a genus *(in genere divinae revelationis)*, in which prophecy constitutes an imperfect grade *(quid imperfectum)*. In its highest grade *(perfectio divinae revelationis)*, divine revelation is realized only in heaven: there the most exalted mysteries and contingent futures are perfectly revealed in God, who is seen by the blessed thanks to a light known as the *lumen gloriae*. This light exists as a permanent form and is the perfection of the *lumen propheticum*, which is given only in a transitory and imperfect manner.

Q. 171, *a.* 5, *c:* " Respondeo dicendum... super Gen. ad litt. "

St. Thomas contrasts formal revelation with what he calls *quidam instinctus*, a term borrowed from St. Augustine. Modern writers have often translated this term as " inspiration. " But, in the theological language of St. Thomas, " revelation " and " inspiration " are correlative, and indicate the two phases of prophecy in the strict sense (see Explanatory Note 5). To avoid confusion, it would be better to translate the *quidam instinctus* of St. Augustine, as adopted by St. Thomas, by the expression " a certain impulse "; one could also say, understanding the expression in a higher sense, " a certain prophetic instinct, " or even, while excluding express revelation, " a certain divine influence. "

This impulse, instinct, or influence is something imperfect in the genus of prophecy *(quid imperfectum in genere prophetiae)*. From the fact that St. Thomas said in the previous article (ad 2m; cf. Explanatory Note 14) that prophecy is something imperfect in the genus of divine revelation *(sicut quid imperfectum in genere divinae revelationis)*, it is evident that one cannot speak of the prophetic instinct as a case of perfect divine revelation, or even as a case of prophecy, since it is only something imperfect in the genus of prophecy.

In other words, formal revelation is prophecy in the proper sense, or prophecy absolutely speaking *(simpliciter)*, while the prophetic impulse or influence is prophecy only in a very qualified sense *(secundum quid)*.

Formal revelation, as opposed to the prophetic instinct, gives rise to two certitudes in the prophet's mind. The first concerns the truths which are revealed; the second, the fact of their revelation. A prophet who is instructed by a formal revelation knows clearly what has been revealed to him, and he knows with equal clarity that God is revealing this. The prophetic instinct cannot give either of these certitudes.

The first certitude, which concerns the truths which are revealed, is only indirectly related to the present article; we shall return to it in q. 173, a. 4, where the question will be asked whether prophets know what they are prophesying.

The second certitude, which concerns the very fact of divine revelation, that is, whether the prophet, when he is thinking or speaking prophetically, knows that God is revealing to him, is directly at issue in the present article. Three proofs are given for the existence of this certitude: the authority of Jeremiah, the certitude of our faith, and the action of Abraham (see Cajetan, *Comm.* n. I).

These two certitudes are evidential certitudes, which make the prophet no less certain of the fact that he is receiving revelation and of what is revealed to him than we are, by the natural light of reason, of the first principles and of the conclusions that flow from them. Such is unquestionably the view of St. Thomas here and in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 3 and in the *Contra Gentes*, III, 154. It does not follow that the prophet sees the essence of the mysteries which are revealed to him, for this evidential certitude bears on their existence *(quia est)*, not on their essence *(quid est)* (Cajetan, *Comm.*, n. II).

This evidential knowledge enjoyed by the prophets is necessary to provide a solid basis for the faith of other men, inasmuch as their faith does not cause them to see, but only to " assent to things known by others " (a. 3, ad 2m; cf. Explanatory Note 11). Some must have seen in order that the rest may believe on their word. It is quite true, of course, that the faith of ordinary Christians rests on that of the Church, but this fact presupposes that the Church's faith is in turn vouched for by authentic expressions of divine truth. These expressions are, in the concrete, the testimony of the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Evangelists, who, favored by a special light from above and charged with a social mission to the human race, have learned with infallible certitude the truths which God intended to communicate to mankind by their mediation, and have incorporated them at his bidding into the twofold deposit of Scripture and Tradition (see Cajetan, *Comm.*, n. V).

EN [16]

Ibid.: " Sed ad ea quae cognoscit... ut ibidem Gregorius subdit. "

In this last case St. Thomas evidently has in mind holy prophets who might think that they were speaking in God's name while actually expressing only their own thoughts. Holy prophets who speak by

virtue of a prophetic instinct without knowing it have no need of being corrected by the Holy Spirit, since they are his unconscious mouthpieces.

EN [17]

Q. 171, *a.* 6 *c.*

In the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 11) St. Thomas says in answer to a difficulty which can be raised concerning any prophecy: "The way in which God's foreknowledge of changeable things can be unchangeably true is explained in another question, on God's knowledge. Consequently, it is not necessary to repeat it here, since the whole immutability of prophecy depends on the immutability of the divine foreknowledge." See the treatise on *God*, French translation by Fr. Sertillanges (Paris, Editions de la Revue des Jeunes), II, 356 ff. and 400 ff.

EN [18]

Ibid., ad 2m.

Hence a minatory prophecy which is not fulfilled is not on that account false. What it says remains rigorously true—for example, that the existing dispositions of the Ninevites by their nature called for severe retribution from the divine justice, and that God was resolved to decree such vengeance if they did not mend their ways. As a matter of fact, the Ninevites, frightened by that threat, were converted, and consequently God no longer had to punish them. These facts, however, in no way impugned the truth of the previous oracle, which affirmed the moral necessity of imminent chastisement, but did not affirm that its actual infliction was certain. Thus, if we consider only the precise terms of the revelation, God neither deceived nor was deceived.

The prophet can likewise avoid being deceived if he does not extend his certitude beyond the strict limits of what is revealed to him; regarding other matters which the Holy Spirit has not revealed to him, he can only make conjectures. Thus Jonah had evidential knowledge that the crimes of the Ninevites made them worthy of imminent destruction, but he did not know whether that destruction

was efficaciously decreed by God. For this reason he fled, wishing to avoid a mission which he thought likely to fail (Jon 4: 2; cf. *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 10, ad 14m; Cajetan, *Comm.* on q. 173, a. 4). He knew enough to doubt, for he was, in this case, a true prophet, and was therefore able to distinguish between those elements in his thought which were from God and those which were from himself. But if he had been favored only with a " prophetic instinct, " he might have made a mistake, and, by confusing his own conjectures with God's revelation, have believed that the destruction which God had announced only in the form of a threat was irrevocably decreed in the divine counsels.

We should not be surprised at such uncertainty, or even possible error, on the prophet's part. As soon as he goes beyond the bounds of what has been revealed to him, he is thinking as a private person: Jonah " quantum ad hoc quod non intelligebat, propheta non fuit " *(loc. cit.)*. This distinction is legitimate, for prophetic inspiration enlightens the mind only partially and discloses only certain particular truths (a. 4). In other matters, the prophet is, as it were, left to himself. He is capable of deceiving himself and attributing to the Spirit of God what comes from his own mind (a. 5). Such are inevitable consequences of the fact that prophecy is an imperfect form of revelation (a. 4, ad 2m), and that the Holy Spirit possesses in man only a " defective instrument " (q. 173, a. 4; cf. Cajetan, *Comm.*).

But God remedies this disadvantage by correcting his interpreter as soon as his personal mistake might become a source of error for others (a. 5). We have an instance of this in the case of Nathan (2 K 7: 3 ff.); and the same principle, in the matter of scriptural inspiration, is the reason for the guarantee of inerrancy (see *infra*, p. 140).

EN [19]

Q. 172, *a.* 1 *c:* " Et hoc videtur esse... secundum corporis puritatem diversam. "

St. Thomas here presents only part of Plato's theory of the soul. According to the Greek philosopher, the human soul exists from all eternity and from its inception is endowed with all knowledge. Once

it is united with a body, however, its knowledge is obscured. St. Thomas makes no mention of this eternal existence of souls, and reports the Platonic position only as regards participation in the ideas.

EN [20]

Ibid.: " Sed quia verius esse... claritas intelligentiae. "

In the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 3), St. Thomas applies the term " natural prophecy " to this experimentally acquired natural knowledge of future events. But in the present article of the *Summa* he denies it the name of prophecy: and rightly so; for, as he wrote in the *De Veritate*, this type of knowledge of future events pertains rather to the arts of medicine and meteorology: " Talis autem futurorum cognitio non dicitur esse divinationis vel prophetiae, sed magis artis. "

Such natural knowledge of the future is favored by two natural dispositions: perfection of the imaginative power and clarity of intellect. Avicenna, from whom St. Thomas borrowed this doctrine, added a third disposition: the power of the soul over external matter. St. Thomas was aware of Avicenna's view, for the 9th objection in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 3 is worded: " Ad prophetiam non requiruntur nisi tria: scilicet claritas intelligentiae, et perfectio virtutis imaginativae, et potestas animae ut ei materia exterior obediat, ut Avicenna ponit in VI *de Naturalibus.* " But the Angelic Doctor rejects the third of these dispositions, adding that even angels have no such power over external matter, " cum etiam nec ipsis angelis ad nutum deserviat materia corporalis, ut Augustinus dicit [*De Trin.*, III, 8] " (*ibid.*, ad 9m).

EN [21]

Q. 172, *a.* 2 *c.*

It is the constant teaching of St. Thomas, set forth at the end of Part I of the *Summa*, that no created intelligence can illuminate another by giving it a light of nature, of grace, or of glory (" tradendo illi lumen sive naturae, sive gratiae, sive gloriae "). See I, q. 106, a. 1, ad 2m.

This doctrine is here taken for granted, but it is expressly stated in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 8). Here are St. Thomas's exact words:

> Two things concur in effecting prophetic revelation: the illumination of the mind and the formation of the representations in the imaginative power. Therefore, the prophetic light itself, by which the mind of the prophet is enlightened, comes from God as its primary source. Nevertheless, the human mind is strengthened and to some extent prepared for its proper reception by the angelic light. For, since the power of the divine light is most simple and most universal, there is no proportion between it and the reception of it by the human soul in this life, unless it is limited and specified through union with the angelic light, which is narrower in scope and more commensurate with the human mind. But the formation of the representations in the imaginative power must be attributed properly to the angels, since the whole of bodily creation is under the direction of the spiritual creation, as Augustine proves [*De Trin.*, III, 4]. Now, the imaginative power uses a bodily organ; hence, the formation of representations in the imaginative power is part of the work proper to the angels.

Concerning the action of spiritual agencies, whether angels or men, on the human intellect, St. Thomas makes an application of the general law that every master, whoever he be, must in some way approach the mind he wishes to instruct, rather than try to soar above those who are looking to him for the truth. He must play a twofold role: (1) strengthen and tighten the disciple's mind, showing him how to make use of middle terms in order to reason to scientific conclusions; (2) present him with less universal propositions so as to lead him to discover those which are more universal, or give him examples drawn from experience, either by way of comparison or contrast, or any other such means, with the help of which the disciple can discover new truths. (See I, q. 111, a. 1; q. 117, a. 1).

EN [22]

Q. 172, *a.* 3 *c.*

St. Thomas clearly does not deny that prophecy demands dispositions in the prophet. But he answers that if these dispositions exist, God uses them; if they are lacking, God produces them. As in the case of all other divine gifts, the presence of a previous disposition does not necessarily demand the bestowal of the gift which it prepares

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EN [22]

Q. 172, a. 3 c.

St. Thomas clearly does not deny that prophecy demands dispositions in the prophet. But he answers that if these dispositions exist, God uses them; if they are lacking, God produces them. As in the case of all other divine gifts, the presence of a previous disposition does not necessarily demand the bestowal of the gift which it prepares

for. God's good pleasure is not limited by anything, and, if it pleases him, he can simultaneously create the subject, the disposition, and the grace, just as he can simultaneously create the matter, the disposition, and the form.

This case is entirely different from that which is called prophecy in the broad sense, and which St. Thomas in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 4) still terms *prophetia naturalis*. In that case the dispositions—*sc.*, the perfection of the imaginative faculty, and the acuteness and clarity of the intellect—play a leading part.

EN [23]

Q. 172, *a.* 4 *c:* " Si vero consideremus... per morum malitiam. "

The incompatibility of prophecy with certain defects comes from the fact that they impede its exercise. St. Thomas calls attention to this in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 5):

> Some of the sins by which charity is lost hinder the use of prophecy, and some do not. For, since the sins of the flesh draw the mind entirely away from things spiritual, by the very fact that one is given to sins of the flesh he is rendered unfit for prophecy. For the mind must be eminently spiritual in order to have the revelation of prophecy. But sins of the spirit do not to the same extent interfere with the mind's spirituality. Therefore, it happens that one who is subject to sins of the spirit, but not to those of the flesh, or even to the endless cares of this life, which withdraw the mind from its spirituality, can be a prophet. And, therefore, Rabbi Moses says that the entanglement in the pleasures and cares of this world is a sign that one is a false prophet.

St. Thomas's conclusion may perhaps be summarized as follows: prophecy does not require holiness of life (charity), but it does require purity of life for its actual exercise.

EN [24]

Ibid., ad 1*m:* " Qui sunt quasi instrumenta divinae cognitionis. "

This is one of the two texts in this treatise in which St. Thomas compares the prophet to an " instrument " of God. On this subject, see below, p. 77 f., especially p. 82, note 3.

EN [25]

Ibid., ad 4m.

The divine wisdom is the sole judge of what gifts it will bestow. On this question St. Thomas remarks in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 5, ad 6m):

> Not every good man is more fit to become a prophet than every sinner. For some who lack charity have minds more fit to perceive spiritual things, since they are free from carnal affections and worldly cares, and are gifted with a natural clarity of understanding. On the other hand, some who have charity are occupied with worldly business, are busy begetting children, and do not have a naturally acute understanding. Therefore, because of these and similar conditions, the gift of prophecy sometimes is given to some evil men and denied to some good men.

EN [26]

Q. 172, a. 5, ad 2m.

In addition to these two methods used by demons to manifest the future, St. Thomas in the *Contra Gentes* (III, 154) enumerates a third: " by certain external indications such as the flight and chattering of birds, signs perceived in the entrails of animals, figures outlined by certain points, and the like. " But this pertains rather to divination, which he has discussed at length elsewhere: see II-II, q. 95, treatise on *Religion*, French translation with notes of Fr. Mennessier, (Paris, Editions de la Revue des Jeunes) II.

EN [27]

Ibid., ad 3m.

The differences between divine and demonic prophecy can be reduced to three: (1) divine prophecy extends to everything known to God alone; demonic prophecy can include only what pertains to the understanding of demons; (2) divine prophecy involves an enlightenment of the intellect; demonic prophecy can give no such intellectual light; (3) divine prophecy cannot be false; demonic prophecy sometimes contains errors.

EN [28]

Q. 172, *a.* 6 *c:* " Respondeo dicendum... alicuius veritatis. "

We can here see St. Thomas's optimism, both in the intellectual and moral order and in the real order. There is no reality which does not include some good, and there can be no error which does not contain some truth. This optimism is apparent in St. Thomas's insistence on the providential order by which God governs the predictions of demons, as explained in the reply to the first objection.

EN [29]

Ibid., ad 1*m:* " Ad primum... praedixerunt de Christo. "

Against the opinion of many Christians, St. Thomas admits that the demons can sometimes make true predictions because they are sometimes instruments of God himself, who makes use of them to instruct good men. The reasons which he gives for this providential disposition—to make the truth more credible and to lead men more easily to the faith—are unusually cogent and, unfortunately, rather rarely understood in this age of general pessimism.

Concerning the Sybils, the reader may consult what has been asid in the treatise on *Faith*, q. 2, a. 7, ad 7m.

EN [30]

Ibid.: " Sed etiam quando... a Spiritu Sancto est. "

Even when false prophets are the instruments of demons, St. Thomas still succeeds in detecting the elements of truth which may be present in their prophecies. He does not forget that every nature, whatever it be, comes from God, and he holds it as certain that there can be communication between good and evil spirits. Under these two aspects the Holy Spirit may still be credited, in the last analysis, with inspiring the truth which is discernible in the statements of false prophets.

EN [31]

Q. 173, *a.* 1: " Utrum prophetae ipsam Dei essentiam videant ".

The question is stated differently in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 6): *Utrum prophetae videant in speculo aeternitatis?* But the problem studied

in the *Summa* is actually the same, as may be seen from the body of the article. The expression, " mirror of eternity, " seems to come from Avicenna. The sixth objection in the *De Veritate* is phrased as follows: " Avicenna says that sometimes the mind of man is elevated so high that it is united to the mirror of foreknowledge *(speculo praescientiae)*. " * It is obvious that the prophet cannot normally see God's essence (cf. q. 171, a. 2), but is it not possible for him to contemplate the divine essence under a particular aspect, insofar as it is a reflection of creatures and of future contingent events? St. Thomas replies in the negative, but at the same time tries to save, by his explanation of it, the traditional expression, " mirror of eternity, " which had been adopted by the masters. This " mirror of eternity, " as he understands it, is no longer God himself contemplated by the prophets insofar as he reflects realities, but rather a created reality in which God's own eternity is reflected, so that consequently the " mirror of eternity " is not itself eternal, but is that which reflects eternity.

> *Quod autem a magistris dicitur, prophetas in speculo aeternitatis videre, non sic intelligendum est quasi ipsum Deum aeternum videant prout est speculum rerum; sed quia aliquid creatum intuentur, in quo ipsa aeternitas Dei repraesentatur: ut sic speculum aeternitatis intelligatur non quod est aeternum, sed quod est aeternitatem repraesentans* (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 6 c).

* The English translation in the Library of Living Catholic Thought series (Chicago, 1953) gives the following note on this text of the *De Veritate:*

> In this and in the following difficulty, the Leonine text has the *world* of foreknowledge, higher *world*, and *world* of intelligible substances, *saeculum* in each case; the earlier editions have *mirror (speculum)*. This use of *saeculum* seems a bit unusual, but the meaning is clear enough.
>
> — Trans.

EN [32]

Ibid., c: " Fuerunt autem quidam... speculum aeternitatis. ... "

The expression " mirror of eternity " *(speculum aeternitatis)* is metaphorical, and is thus explained by St. Thomas in the *De Veritate (loc. cit.):*

> Properly speaking, a mirror exists only in material things. But in spiritual things something is called a mirror in a transferred

sense, because of the likeness taken from the material mirror. Thus, in spiritual things we call that a mirror in which other things are represented, just as the forms of visible things appear in a material mirror. Therefore, some say that the divine mind, in which all the intelligible characters of things shine forth, is a kind of mirror, and that it is called the " mirror of eternity " because it is eternal, inasmuch as it has eternity.

EN [33]

Q. 173, *a.* 2 *c:* " ...vel etiam divinitus ordinatas ex his quae a sensibus sunt acceptae. ... "

When God thus arranges in a special way the imaginative forms of things which have been perceived by the senses, there is an intervention of the prophetic light, as is explained in the reply to the second objection. The prophet's mind discovers a deeper truth in these imaginative forms, thanks to the influence and brightness of a light higher than that of his own intellect. This light can come from no other source than God; it is the prophetic light.

EN [34]

Ibid.: " et ad hoc pertinet interpretatio sermonum. "

Evidently for St. Thomas, " interpretation of speeches " is a charism which can give the ability to comment on Holy Scripture, rather than merely that of interpreting words spoken with the gift of tongues. This charism belongs to the same order as that of prophecy, in accordance with the principle: " Sacra Scriptura eodem Spiritu interpretatur quo est condita " (*In Rom. XII*, lect. 2; cf. *Quodl. XII*, q. 17). (See Explanatory Note 73.)

EN [35]

Ibid.

Hence there are three cases to be considered, accordingly as God supernaturally gives the prophet: (1) light and representations, (2) light without representations, or (3) representations without light.

In the third case, there can be question only of imaginative visions or sensory apparitions not understood by the prophet; obviously there could be no question of intelligible representations since, in

the absence of a light, there can be no intellectual knowledge. A charism of such an inferior grade does not deserve the name of prophecy, except in a very improper sense *(quiddam imperfectum in genere prophetiae)*, or even not at all: " si cognitio sit secundum acceptationem tantum supernaturalis, non dicetur ex hoc aliquis propheta " (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 7 c).

On the other hand, in the first two cases there is true supernatural knowledge and true prophecy. As is demanded by all knowledge, there will be in each of these cases a light and intelligible representations; further, these representations will have imaginative forms as their basis, since human thought cannot exist without recourse to phantasms. In short, these two cases will have the same psychological structure, *sc.*, that found in any intellectual knowledge. But the intelligible representations will be conferred on the mind in different ways, and this will give rise to the different grades of prophetic knowledge.

a) In the normal case of full prophetic knowledge, the supernatural light conferred on the inspired subject will not only enlighten his judgment, which is its essential role, but will also previously contribute to the formation of the concepts which serve as the material of that judgment. This can take place in either of two ways:

i) Sometimes the prophetic light will be strong enough to impress intelligible representations directly on the prophet's mind, or to rearrange in a supernatural way representations which he already had (see Explanatory Note 37). In the brilliance of the supernatural illumination, the prophet will immediately grasp the truths being communicated to him, and will do so in the best possible way, *sc.*, by means of ideas. Here we have the case of *directly infused intelligible representations*, the highest grade of prophetic knowledge. It is obvious that, in order to apprehend these intelligible forms, the prophet will need some imaginative substrate, in conformity with the general requirements of human knowledge. But the phantasms already stored up in his memory will provide sufficient materials to enable his mind, illuminated by the contemplation of infused truths, to evoke suitable imaginative forms (cf. q. 174, a. 2, ad 4m, and Cajetan, *Comm.*, n. III; *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 12 c prope finem, and ad 1m, 2m, and 4m).

ii) At other times the prophetic light will not be strong enough directly to imprint on the prophet's mind the ideas which God wishes to communicate to him. In such cases he will receive these supernatural representations *in an inferior way, as either imaginary or even sensory forms,* and will himself have to abstract from these forms the ideas which will serve as the material of his judgment. But he cannot do this by his unaided reason; he will need a light commensurate with the supernatural datum he has received, i.e., a supernatural light. This will be the prophetic light, and in this case too, besides its essential role of enlightening the judgment, it will play a part in the formation of the concepts on which the judgment bears; but in this case, the action of the prophetic light in the formation of concepts will be indirect, and will involve abstraction from imaginative data, rather than direct, as in the preceding case, where the concepts were immediately infused.

This second case includes various subspecies which vary in dignity according to the way in which the prophet receives the required images. There will sometimes be a properly imaginative vision, involving either the reception of totally new images or a new combination (effected by God) of images previously acquired in a natural way. At other times, in an inferior grade, the prophet will be favored only with sensory apparitions and will himself have to derive from them the imaginative forms which will, in turn, supply the intelligible forms. Or, finally, he might receive the imaginative or sensory vision only mediately, through the agency of another man who has received it, without the required light, and submits it to his judgment.

The recourse to phantasms of which we have just spoken must be carefully distinguished from that previously discussed in connection with directly infused intelligible representations. In the preceding case, the mind first received the intelligible representations and only subsequently turned to naturally acquired imaginative forms, as to a necessary psychological support. Here the mind begins with imaginative representations which it has received in a supernatural way, and abstracts its intelligible representations from this imaginative data. Each process is the reverse of the other. The first process, moreover, clearly corresponds to a more powerful supernatural light

and hence to a more excellent grade of prophetic knowledge (see q. 174, a. 2 and Explanatory Note 48; *De Ver.*, q. 12, esp. ad 2m).

b) But another case is also possible. The prophetic light may be granted to the mind only to enlighten the judgment, without playing any part in the formation of its ideas. God, in such a case, does not give the inspired subject either new ideas or new images; he lets him make use of data acquired in a natural way by the ordinary exercise of his senses, imagination, and intellect. Under these circumstances the knowledge of the inspired subject is limited to the intelligible representations which he has been able to acquire naturally by his own powers *(quae cursu naturali homo apprehendit)*; he learns nothing new from the supernatural light, but is indebted to it only for his ability to make judgments with divine certitude and clarity about things which he has learned through natural processes. This is the case which we have above referred to as "light without representations," and it is now clear how this phrase should be understood: without supernatural representations. This is also what modern terminology calls "inspiration" as opposed to "revelation," inasmuch as the latter implies supernaturally bestowed representations and embraces all the previously described cases. The prophetic light here acts in a less powerful way, and St. Thomas deems this case inferior to those of prophecy in the proper sense.

Accordingly as one or another of these types of prophecy is had, the ideas on which the prophet's judgment bears may be either supernatural or natural. But it should be noted that there is here question of the way in which they are acquired *(quoad modum)*, and not necessarily of their intrinsic formality *(quoad substantiam)*.[1] From this last point of view the situation is not the same. There can be "revelations" which disclose intrinsically natural truths—for example, Elisha's discovery of what Gehazi was doing at a distance—and, conversely, simple "inspiration" can bear on truths which are in themselves supernatural—for example, St. Luke's description of the Annunciation which he had learned in a natural way through listening to the Blessed Virgin's account of it.

[1] The distinction between *quod modum* and *quoad substantiam* is here understood in the sense generally accepted in the Thomist school; the viewpoint of q. 171, a. 2, ad 3m is quite different and less common. Cf. M. LABOURDETTE, in *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950) 409-11.

The preceding analysis may be summarized in the following diagram, in which the grades are listed in descending order (for this classification see, in addition to the present article, q. 174, a. 2 and 3; *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 7, 12 and 13):

ACCEPTIO

SPECIES INTELLIGIBILES

supra Prophetiam proprie dictam	1) INFUSED (supernaturally) a) *Directly:* i) by impression of new ideas	LUMEN and SPECIES
	ii) by new arrangement of old ideas (with further recourse to a natural imaginative support)	
Prophetia proprie dicta (esp. i)	b) *Indirectly*, i. e., abstracted with the help of a prophetic light, from: i) imaginative visions a') infusion of new images b') new arrangement of old images ii) sensory visions from which the inspired subject has to derive his images iii) imaginative or sensory visions granted to another who submits them to the one inspired	"Revelation" (in modern sense)
infra Prophetiam proprie dictam	2) ACQUIRED (naturally)	LUMEN alone "Inspiration" (in modern sense)
Prophetia secundum quid	a) imaginative forms b) sensory forms supernatural, but not understood by the inspired subject	SPECIES without LUMEN

EN [36]

Ibid., ad 3m.

Cajetan (*Comm.*, n. III) correctly remarks that the mind actually cannot, without the aid of a prophetic light, organize its natural images in such a way as to *discover* in them supernatural truths. But it can subsequently organize its images so as to contemplate these truths once they have been revealed. This is likewise what we ourselves do when we engage in contemplating the mysteries which have been declared to us by witnesses of God.

EN [37]

Q. 173, *a.* 3 *c:* " ...secundum immissionem intelligibilium specierum. ... "

As Cajetan remarks, St. Thomas evidently does not wish to exclude here the case of new combinations of intelligible ideas. Just as God can recombine imaginative forms which have previously been acquired, so too he can rearrange ideas which already exist in the prophet's mind.

EN [38]

Ibid.: " Manifestum est autem... significabatur Ecclesia. "

The spiritual meanings, in virtue of which events or realities mentioned in the Old Testament prophetically symbolize events or realities of the New, are willed by divine Providence. St. Thomas's example is significant: the ark of Noah is a symbol of the Church.

EN [39]

Ibid.: " Sed quando fit revelatio... ab his quae imaginabiliter videt. ... "

In short, transport (" abstractio a sensibus ") is required in only one case, that of prophecy which takes place with the help of imaginative forms. Such transport is necessary to prevent the prophet from confusing the forms in his imagination with the external objects which his senses could perceive.

Transport is never possible in the case of prophecy which is effected with the help of sensory forms, for the prophet needs the use of his senses to perceive these forms.

Such transport, moreover, is not necessary to enable the prophet to make a supernatural and infallible judgment by means of the prophetic light, nor to make him understand the intelligible forms which God either gives him by way of infused knowledge or wisdom, or rearranges so that new ideas may arise.

There is one case, however, in which transport is demanded for the exercise of prophecy; *sc.*, when there is question of contemplating the highest truths (see ad 3m). In this case, the more withdrawn the prophet is from his senses, the better he is able to contemplate. This law, as Cajetan observes, is likewise verified in the natural order: "Quoniam disponentes aut judicantes de sensibilibus, non abstrahimur, sed sensibus immergimur; ad altiora autem speculanda, quanto magis abstrahimur, melius perspicimus" (*Comm.*, n. II).

EN [40]

Ibid.: "Talis tamen alienatio a sensibus... super eum manus Domini."

St. Thomas, according to Cajetan, expresses a "golden maxim" *(aureum verbum)* and a "divine stipulation". *(divinam conditionem)* when he writes that transport or alienation from the senses in cases of prophecy cannot be the effect of a natural disorder. And Cajetan judiciously adds that such transport is even more incompatible with moral disorder, for grace in general has the function of perfecting nature and morals, not of destroying, diminishing, or violating them.

EN [41]

Ibid., ad 4m.

This reply is a restatement of the *sed contra* of the article: prophetic discourse is always subject to the prophet's mind, even though the Holy Spirit is specially responsible for the prophetic revelation. When he speaks, therefore, the prophet must not give the impression that he is doing so with a disturbed mind, as though another were speaking through his mouth; he must know what he

is saying and speak of what he has seen. It would be unfitting if those who are taught and enlightened by God for the edification of the Church were to conduct themselves like irrational beings when proclaiming the divine mysteries (see Cajetan, *Comm.*, n. IV).

EN [42]

Q. 173, *a.* 4 *c:* " Sciendum tamen quod... Spiritus intendit. "

How are we to understand the expression here used by St. Thomas in reference to the prophets—that they are defective instruments of the Holy Spirit who acts upon them as principal cause? Separate consideration will be given to this question (see *infra*, p. 77 ff.).

EN [43]

Ibid.: " Et per hoc patet... illustratur perfecte. "

According to this reply, the objections at the beginning of the article have reference to genuine prophets, whose mind is perfectly enlightened by God. St. Thomas admits the validity of these objections, and concedes the conclusion to which they lead. Now these three objections tended to grant that the prophet has evidential knowledge. Cajetan observes that St. Thomas has already (q. 171, a. 5, *Comm.*, n. II) recognized that the prophet has two sorts of evidence: that of the fact of revelation — namely, that it comes from God — and that of the truths which are revealed (see Explanatory Note 15). But he points out that certain prophets have only a light which is, so to speak, shaded: at times they know contingent future events only in their causes and not in themselves. Thus Jonah, for example, did not know whether Nineveh would really be destroyed, for that certitude was not communicated to him by the Holy Spirit, in whose hands he was merely a defective instrument (see Explanatory Note 18).

EN [44]

Q. 174, *a.* 1 *c:* " Et horum est prophetia... non sunt in nobis. "

In the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 10), St. Thomas gives the examples of the resurrection of Lazarus and the conception of Christ. In

connection with the latter he remarks (ad 6m): "The consent of the Blessed Virgin intervened in the conception of Christ as something which removed a hindrance and not as an operative cause. For it was not fitting for so great a favor to be given to one who was unwilling."

EN [45]

Ibid.: "Et quia praedostinatio sub praescientia comprehenditur."

As will be recalled, St. Thomas has already maintained (q. 171, a. 3, ad 3m) that there is no room for distinguishing between different species of prophecy, for the formal element in prophecy is the prophetic light, and there is but one such light (see Explanatory Note 12). Here, on the contrary, St. Thomas concedes that there are several species of prophecy. This is because he finds himself confronted by a gloss ascribed to St. Jerome, which distinguished three kinds: prophecy of threat, prophecy of foreknowledge, and prophecy of predestination. He justifies this distinction in terms of a distinction of objects. At the end of the article, however, St. Thomas reduces the division to two kinds: prophecy of threat (or promise) and prophecy of foreknowledge (under which he includes predestination). Equivalently he says that there are only two kinds of prophetic revelation: the revelation of future events in their causes, and the revelation of future events in themselves. But the distinctive note of prophecy in the proper sense is the knowledge of future events in themselves (q. 172, a. 1). And since future events can be known in their causes by natural means, it follows that there is only one species of prophecy properly so called, in which the formal element is the prophetic light. This is the prophecy of foreknowledge, which can bear upon different objects accordingly as it reflects one or another aspect of the divine knowledge.

EN [46]

Q. 174, a. 2 c.

As was said above (Explanatory Note 35), the prophet's knowledge, in the two cases which are here being compared, necessarily involves intelligible representations and imaginative forms. But in the case of pure "intellectual vision," the intelligible representations are

directly infused into the mind by the powerful prophetic light itself, and the imaginative forms, natural in origin, are evoked after the event as a help for contemplating the infused ideas. Conversely, the prophetic light in the other case is of an inferior order and is unable to give the mind this direct grasp of the truth in itself. This truth, therefore, has to be presented to the mind in an inferior way, containing sensory elements, i.e., in an imaginative vision. Subsequently the mind, aided by the prophetic light, abstracts from this vision the intelligible representations which it would not have been able to perceive directly. Since the brightness of the supernatural light is what determines the excellence of prophecy, the second case is obviously of a lower grade than the first (see *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 12, ad 1m and 2m).

EN [47]

Ibid., ad 3m: " Qui etiam ex hoc... divini luminis. "

St. Thomas here contrasts the *prophets*, who contemplate supernatural truth, with the *hagiographers*, who more frequently treat only of truths of the natural order. But the reservations " more " and " more frequently " *(plures, frequentius)* should not be overlooked. For the sacred writers too were sometimes empowered to make judgments about supernatural truths, as St. Thomas observes elsewhere (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 12, ad 10m). And since they do not normally arrive at these truths by imaginative visions, which are the distinctive attribute of " prophets, " it follows that they receive infused intelligible representations. In this case their charism becomes superior to that of the prophets. St. Thomas accordingly ranks David above Isaiah and Jeremiah (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 13 c; cf. q. 174, a. 4, ad 1m).

EN [48]

Ibid., ad 4m: " Ad quartum... qualiumque. "

Imaginative visions should not be confused with the images which are necessary for all human thought. In prophecy involving imaginative visions, these visions present the truth itself by means of symbols and comparisons. In prophecy which presents supernatural

truths in the pure state, the images serve as a support for the understanding of these truths. In keeping with man's natural processes of knowledge, these images are normally derived from sense-experience (see Explanatory Note 35).

EN [49]

Q. 174, *a.* 3 *c:* " Magis autem est... ad supernaturalem veritatem. "

The cases of Samson and Solomon are not alike, although St. Thomas ranks them both below prophecy in the proper sense. In the case of Samson, we are dealing with an interior instinct *(interior instinctus)* which impels the recipient to perform external actions. To reduce every supernatural influence to prophecy is actually to take the term in a broad sense, as we read in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 13): " largo modo accipiendo prophetiam, secundum quod omnis supernaturalis influxus ad prophetiam reducitur. " In the case of Solomon, on the other hand, we are dealing with a true interior light *(interius lumen)* which enables the recipient to form supernatural and infallible judgments about truths surpassing the limits of human knowledge.

Even though these two grades are inferior to prophecy in the proper sense, they cannot be classified as cases of prophetic instinct, as understood by St. Thomas when he calls it something imperfect in the genus of prophecy *(quid imperfectum in genere prophetiae,* q. 171, a. 5; q. 173, a. 4), unless we assume that Samson and Solomon were unconscious of the charism conferred on them by God. These two grades still belong in the genus of prophecy, but are on a lower level with respect to prophecy which, in its formal sense, reveals some supernatural truth.

EN [50]

Q. 174, *a.* 4, *ad* 3*m.*

Moses is the greatest prophetic figure of the Old Testament, both because of his intimate and sustained relations with God (concerning his vision of the divine essence, see Explanatory Note 59) and because of the exceptional mission he received, *sc.*, to promulgate

the Law and to preside over the marvelous events that would be the inspiration of all the later history of Israel. Though God's servants in the New Testament were even greater than Moses, their superiority did not consist in their personal gifts, which were perhaps less remarkable, but rather in the fact of belonging to the new economy established by Christ, which essentially surpassed the old order, just as grace surpassed the Law. More particularly, " there is a clearer revelation in the New Testament; as is written in 2 Corinthians [3: 18], ' But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with faces unveiled . . . ' Here, the Apostle distinctly puts himself and the other apostles on a higher plane than Moses " (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 14, ad 5m).

EN [51]

Q. 174, *a.* 5, *ad* 3*m.*

Several times in his works St. Thomas returned to this question of the prophecy exercised by Christ; and his thought gradually progressed. An account of his doctrine and its development may be found in the treatise on *The Incarnate Word* (III, qq. 1-59) in the French translation of Fr. Héris, O.P. (Paris, Editions de la Revue des Jeunes), II, 346-51.

EN [52]

Ibid., ad 4*m.*

Following the lead of St. Augustine, whom he cites in II-II, q. 95, a. 4, ad 2m, St. Thomas considers two possible explanations of how the witch of Endor summoned Samuel: (1) either it was *genuine*, not because the demons themselves had any power over the soul of this just man, but because God may have deemed it appropriate to satisfy Saul's wishes and to inform him in this way of his impending ruin; (2) or it was a mere *diabolical illusion*, in which the real Samuel took no part. But he hesitates to advance this second explanation because of the explicit text of Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) 46: 20 (Vulg. 23). In I, q. 89, a. 8, ad 2m, he questioned the canonical authenticity of this book of the Bible, something which we can no longer do since the Council of Trent. Still in the footsteps of

St. Augustine (II-II, *loc. cit.*), he here observes more correctly that the sacred author might have been speaking only according to the opinion of Saul and his companions, and have called by the name of Samuel what was really a mere phantom.

EN [53]

Q. 174, *a.* 6: " Utrum gradus prophetiae... temporis processum. "

Here we have the counterpart of the problem in the treatise on *Faith* (II-II, q. 1, a. 7): " Have the articles of faith increased with the passage of time? " In the treatise on *Faith*, St. Thomas replied rather succinctly that all the articles of faith were contained implicitly in certain primary truths, *sc.*, belief in the existence of God and in his providence as regards the salvation of men. Here we have a more detailed reply, which brings in the mysteries of the knowledge of God and of the Incarnation, and makes distinctions between the various epochs. Besides, he alludes to revelations which teach men how they should act. It should be kept in mind that St. Thomas admits as *subjective* factors making for progress in revelation both the prophetic light and the new images and ideas which lead to new supernatural truths. From the *objective* point of view, however, these new supernatural truths constitute only a development from the implicit to the explicit, from the imperfect to the perfect. In the treatise on *Faith* he was speaking principally from this latter point of view.

EN [54]

Ibid., *c:* " ...quod quidem nomen.., ineffabilis nominis. "

" Adonai " is the word used in place of the Tetragrammaton " Yahweh, " the personal name of God which the Jews out of reverence never pronounced. Whenever they met the Tetragrammaton in a text of Holy Scripture, the readers were warned by the special vocalization that they should substitute for this ineffable name either the word " Adonai " or the word " Elohim. " The vowels of the name " Yahweh " were never written, but were replaced either by those of the word " Adonai " (whence originated the erroneous pronunciation " Jehovah, " so long in use) or by those of the word

"Elohim" (which gave rise to the pronunciation, "Jehovih"). Concerning the Tetragrammaton and its theological meaning, see I, q. 13, a. 9; a. 11, ad 1m.

EN [55]

Ibid., ad 2m: "Ad secundum dicendum... quae gentibus imperaret."

The foundation of Rome in B.C. 753 is approximately contemporaneous with the beginnings of prophecy in Israel: Amos and Hosea were hardly before that date, and the mission of Isaiah took place in the second half of the eighth century B.C. We may likewise ascribe to this and the following century the definitive editing of certain historical works, which were themselves unquestionably based on much older sources that had not yet received their final form. Thus it would seem that on the eve of the catastrophe which was about to disperse his chosen people, and at the birth of the empire which was to complete their ruin, God saw to it that his Revelation was set down in a written form which would be able to survive these material disasters and even reach the peoples of pagan lands. Such, at least, is the hidden harmony which we, following the lead of St. Augustine, can discern and admire in the dispositions of God's providence.

EN [56]

Ibid. ad 3m: "Et singulis temporibus... actuum directionem."

Prophecy did not cease with John the Baptist, or even with the end of the Apostolic Age. God continued and still continues through the centuries to assist his Church with this charism (see p. 165, note 2). We must, however, make several important reservations in this delicate matter.

(1) In the first place, there can be no question of innovations in the *doctrines of faith.* For revelation closed with the end of the Apostolic era, and nothing can ever be added to this deposit. When the Church from time to time makes dogmatic definitions, she does not, as is well known, proclaim any new revelation, but merely states in explicit form what was already contained in the deposit of faith. The revelations received by holy mystics, such as a St. Catherine of Siena or a St. Teresa of Avila, add nothing substantial to Christian

doctrine, but merely clarify it. The Church, moreover, rigorously examines the orthodoxy of these private revelations before recognizing their divine origin.

(2) The new prophets, therefore, cannot be bearers of really new revelations except as regards the practical conduct of Christians *(ad humanorum actuum directionem)*, which necessarily varies with the passage of time. But even in such cases these prophets should not be indiscriminately obeyed. On this point we must make a distinction. *(a)* If their directives or reforms concern the *public life of the Church*, the Church herself must officially approve before they may be heeded. And the Church will not approve them unless they give manifest signs of their supernatural mission, such as miracles or incontrovertible scriptural proofs. The Church has thus given official recognition to the revelations of St. Margaret Mary concerning devotion to the Sacred Heart. *(b)* If they claim to direct only the *private actions* of certain persons or groups, and if their prescriptions are also in agreement with the general laws of the Church, those interested are free to follow them if they think proper. But if their directives are at variance with the general laws of the Church, or with laws of some group which have been approved by the Church, or if they are even suspected of such variance, then they are not to be believed or obeyed. The reason is simple: it is certain that the laws of the Church are good and approved by God, but there is no evidence that the innovator is a genuine prophet. There can be no doubt as to the choice dictated by Christian prudence between the unquestionably good and authorized conduct prescribed by the general laws, and the supposedly better, but dubiously authorized, conduct which is proposed as a substitute. Let no one be afraid of "despising the prophets" by acting thus; for the Apostle, having written these words, immediately adds, "but test them all, retaining only what is good, and avoiding every kind of evil" (1 Th 5: 20-22). See Cajetan, *Comm.*, nn. III-V.

These rules of discernment are very wise. If Christians had always observed them, the Church would not have had so many times in her history to deplore the excesses of certain "spiritual" persons who, imprudently accepting the innovations of those falsely claiming to be inspired, have fallen into gross disorders or even plunged into heresy.

EN [57]

Q. 175, *a.* 1 *c:* " Hujusmodi autem abstractio... ex virtute divina. "

To these three causes we may add a fourth which St. Thomas himself mentions elsewhere, *sc.*, the intensity with which the soul engages in contemplation (see q. 173, a. 3 c fin. and ad 2m; *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 9; q. 13, a. 3) or in love (see following article; I-II, q. 28, a. 3), whereby it can be totally absorbed to the point of transport. This, however, is a cause intrinsic to the soul and for that reason is not listed by St. Thomas with the three extrinsic causes here mentioned: God, the devil, and, finally, the body; although this last is intrinsic to the human composite, it is extrinsic to the soul.

As is well known, the Angelic Doctor was able to become abstracted at will and could immerse himself so deeply in contemplation as to feel nothing of a painful medical treatment. But other ecstacies which caused him to be raised above the ground make it evident that the activity of God also intervened in his case (Cajetan, *Comm.* on a. 2).

EN [58]

Q. 175, *a.* 2, *ad* 1*m.*

Ecstacies of love are more natural to man in his present status than mental raptures. For the will even now has an unlimited tendency toward the Absolute Good, whereas the intellect cannot attain Truth except through the medium of sensible objects. The mind must suffer violence and abandon its proper mode of operation in order to rise to the plane of ideas without going by way of images. The appetitive power, on the other hand, merely follows the bent of its nature when it goes out of itself and embraces the infinite. Here we have a good illustration of, or even the reason for, the primacy of love over knowledge in this present life.

EN [59]

Q. 175, *a.* 3 *c.*

As proof that St. Paul saw the divine essence, St. Thomas appeals to two authorities: that of St. Augustine and that of the Apostle himself. Cajetan has a " scruple " regarding the words of the latter.

St. Paul says that he *heard*, not that he saw, and that he perceived *words* (in the plural), not a single object, as would be appropriate for an intuition of the divine essence.

But St. Thomas himself replies to this objection (*In II Cor. XII*, lect. 2): " dicit autem *audivit* pro vidit, quia illa consideratio fuit secundum interiorem actum animae, in quo idem est auditus et visus . . . " Actually it is certain that the Apostle, not knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body, could not have here intended to oppose hearing to sight, nor to attribute to the term " words " a concrete and multiple meaning.

It must be acknowledged, however, that Scripture does not oblige us to think that he saw the divine essence. The " third heaven, " " paradise, " and " ineffable words " can mean a very high mystical experience without necessarily demanding the beatific vision.

As for the case of Moses, to which Thomas appeals as the basis for an *a priori* argument (ad 1m), the most explicit scriptural text (Nm 12: 8) does not distinguish him from the other prophets except by the fact that he saw God while awake, rather than asleep, and under a proper (i.e., human) form, rather than by enigmatic symbols. Elsewhere God refuses to give Moses a direct vision of his face, for " man cannot see me, and live " (Ex 33: 20).

It was the authority of St. Augustine which influenced St. Thomas, and the medieval theologians in general, to concede that Moses and St. Paul had actually seen the divine essence. But the other Fathers of the Church make no categorical assertions on this matter. The reflections of St. John Chrysostom and Theodoret rather oppose this view. Modern writers prefer to abandon this earlier theological opinion as less probable.

EN [60]

Ibid., ad 2m: " Et ideo talis raptus... ad prophetiam pertinet. "

The comparison that St. Thomas here draws between the light which enraptured the mind of St. Paul and the prophetic light is valid only as regards their mode of inherence, not as to their specific nature. For Paul's light, by hypothesis, caused him to see the divine essence, whereas the prophetic light does not confer this vision

(q. 173, a. 1). In the terminology used previously (q. 171, a. 2), one might situate St. Paul's light midway between the light of glory and the prophetic light, saying that it was a "transitory" form like the latter, but "perfect" like the former. In other words, it was essentially the same as the light of glory, but accidentally it was received in the same way as is the prophetic light. (On this matter the reader may consult Cajetan, *Comm.*, q. 171, a. 2, particularly n. IV.) Some reservations should also be made regarding the "perfection" of the light granted to St. Paul and its specific identity with the light of glory. St. Thomas concedes (a. 6, ad 3m) that it was in some sense less perfect, for it did not disclose to the Apostle all that the blessed are able to see in the divine essence (see Explanatory Note 71).

EN [61]

Ibid., ad 3m: "Fuit tamen in eo simul fidei habitus."

On the supposition that St. Paul saw the divine essence, we may find it surprising that he kept even the virtue of faith, since he could not have *believed* things which he had already *seen* with certain evidence, and which he remembered even after the vision had ceased.

The answer is that he did not see everything in the divine essence (cf. *De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 6m). He could still have faith in what had not been manifested to him. And even as to the mysteries which he had contemplated, he could still retain a certain conditional faith with respect to them; that is to say, the interior disposition which rendered him ready to believe them even if he had not seen them.

This solution is applicable to the faith of prophets in general, with reference to the objects of their visions (Cajetan).

In the *De Veritate* (q. 13, a. 2, ad 5m) St. Thomas says that St. Paul's hope after his rapture was similar to his faith. But it seems easier to see how he could have still possessed hope — even actual hope — in this state, inasmuch as he realized that the possession of the divine mystery was not yet granted to him in a definitive way, and that he had not earned it as a reward (see Explanatory Note 63). St. Thomas no doubt deliberately omitted this point in his reply in the *Summa*.

EN [62]

Ibid., ad 4m: " Ad quartum... aquei sive crystallini. "

On the number and nomenclature of the heavens, see *In II Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 4 and *Summa*, I, q. 68, a. 4. On the empyrean heaven in particular, see *In II Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, and *Summa*, I, q. 66, a. 3.

EN [63]

Ibid.: " Et quia visio Dei... delectationis consequentis. "

The delight which flows from contemplation depends ultimately on love, of which it is a fruit (cf. II-II, q. 28). Hence St. Thomas admits (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 2, ad 6m) that, besides having the vision of the blessed, St. Paul had also their act of charity. The love which he experienced in this rapture, like that of heaven, therefore had no meritorious value—no more, indeed, than the vision itself was merited (*ibid.*, ad 8m). Thus this love would likewise be a grace as extraordinary at it was transient.

EN [64]

Q. 175, a. 4, ad 1m: " Ad primum ergo... et sensibilibus. "

Among the blessed after the resurrection, the body, then purified and totally subject to the soul, will not only cease to interfere with the mind's contemplation (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1m), but will even be associated in that contemplation by an overflow which it will receive from the glorified soul (I-II, q. 3, a. 3; q. 4, a. 5 and 6). The senses, of course, will not be able to perceive the divine essence, which is immaterial, but they will discern its reflections in the glorified universe (I, q. 12, a. 3; *Suppl.*, q. 92, a. 2).

EN [65]

Ibid., ad 2m: " Erat autem viator... dispensative.., "

Concerning this " dispensation of the divine power " which prevented the glory of Christ's soul from redounding upon his body, and the beatific knowledge of his mind from overflowing into the

sensory powers, see I-II, q. 14, a. 1, ad 2m; q. 15, a. 5, ad 3m; a. 6; a. 9, ad 3m; q. 45, a. 2 c and ad 1m, etc.

Christ had complete control over all the parts of his soul and body. He could make each of them act in its own connatural way and independently, so as neither to draw the others along nor to interfere with their activity, as happens in us because of the interrelations of the faculties. Thus he was able to contemplate the divine essence with his mind and still remain attentive to the objects present to his senses (*De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 11, ad 3m; q. 13, a. 3, ad 3m).

EN [66]

Ibid., ad 3m: " Ad tertium dicendum... phantasmata, memorabatur. "

The intelligible representations which remained imprinted on St. Paul's mind after his vision were there only in a habitual state. In order for them to be reactivated in acts of knowledge, he was obliged to connect them with forms supplied by his imagination, according to the mode of knowledge which man necessarily exercises in the present life. Thus it was possible for him to *remember* them even though the memory is of itself a power of the sensory order; for in this case it served only as an imaginative support for purely intellectual data (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 3, ad 4m).

The origin of these intelligible representations may be attributed to the direct action of the divine light on the Apostle's passive intellect. This is the explanation which St. Thomas seems to accept here and in the *De Veritate (loc. cit.)*. But conceivably also they could have been actively formed by the mind of Paul himself on the basis of what he contemplated, in accordance with the natural tendency of the intellect to represent to itself in intellectual similitudes whatever it sees; on this point see I, q. 12, a. 9, ad 2m (Cajetan).

EN [67]

Q. 175, a. 5, ad 3m.

It is true that, in themselves, the vegetative functions of the human body operate instinctively, without requiring the attention of the mind and hence without disturbing its activity. In an indirect

way, however, these functions have certain repercussions on the mind, inasmuch as they influence man's sensory functions, on which the operation of his intellect directly depends. In the *De Veritate* (q. 13, a. 4) St. Thomas calls attention to this accidental connection between thought and the most material functions of the body; and Cajetan in turn emphasizes this in his *Commentary*. Digestion, for example, can hamper the free activity of the mind, and conversely intense exertion of the mind can impede the work of the nutritive functions.

This conflict does not arise, St. Thomas adds, in the contemplation of the divine essence, which by definition excludes any activity of the sensory faculties. But the indirect connection between the mind and the vegetative functions is still an important factor in the lower grades of ecstacy and rapture, which involve a certain exercise of the imagination. And the same must be said for the corresponding grades of prophecy.

EN [68]

Q. 175, *a.* 6, *c:* " Sed hunc sensum improbat... apparet in somniis. "

The *De Veritate* (q. 13, a. 5 c) adds at this point: " Thus, it would not have been necessary to distinguish between what he knew and what he did not know, since he would know equally that he was in heaven and that he was transported in the body, i.e., in a likeness of the body, as happens in dreams. " This sentence clarifies and completes the argument which, in the *Summa,* is somewhat elliptical.

EN [69]

Ibid.

The whole argument set forth in the body of this article reappears, often with greater clarity, in the *De Veritate* (q. 13, a. 5). It is also restated, but in briefer form, in *In II Cor. XII*, lect. 1. St. Thomas concludes, in agreement with St. Augustine, that St. Paul knew very well that his body had not been raised to the third heaven with his soul, and that his ignorance concerned only the following point: had his soul, in that unnatural state, been separated from the body in a merely accidental way, *sc.*, by being withdrawn from the sensory

functions, or had it left the body entirely, in an essential way, to such an extent that the Apostle was truly dead, even though only in a miraculous and temporary manner (see the following Explanatory Note)?

St. Augustine's reasoning, however, does not seem irrefutable. St. Paul might have known that he had been really taken up to the third heaven without thereby knowing whether this heaven was purely spiritual or also corporeal, or in other words, whether his soul alone was there or whether it needed the offices of the body. So sublime, indeed, was his vision that he was unable to understand in precisely what state he experienced it, nor, consequently, to what kind of world he had been transported. Besides, the idea of journeys to the celestial spheres, not only in spirit but also in body, was rather widespread among his contemporaries, both Jewish and pagan. It is, therefore, quite possible that St. Paul would have put the question in this sense, which was disapproved by St. Augustine and after him by St. Thomas, but which, on the contrary, was accepted by St. John Chrysostom, and is clearly preferred by all the modern exegetes. Fundamentally, the argument of St. Augustine has demonstrative force only insofar as he holds also that St. Paul saw the divine essence, which obviously implies that the " third heaven " is of a purely spiritual nature. But we have seen that this opinion too is disputable, and today abandoned (see Explanatory Note 59).

EN [70]

Ibid., ad 1m: " Nihil etiam prohiberet mortem... raptum dici. "

If we suppose that the soul of St. Paul was really separated from his body during this rapture, we may call this exceptional state " death. " But it differed from ordinary death in that it was temporary and was effected, not in a natural way, but by a miraculous intervention of God (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 4m).

The use of the term " death " can be extended yet further and applied to states in which the soul is withdrawn from the operations of the body, as when we say, " dead to the senses " (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 2m). It is obvious that " death " is here used in a very relative sense, and is rather a figure of speech.

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Ibid., ad 1m: " Apostolo arrepto... extra corpus esset, nesciebat. "

This was not the only lack of knowledge which prevented St. Paul's contemplation from being equal to that of the angels. St. Thomas, indeed, remarks (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 6m) that he was raised to this rapture only in order that he might subsequently become a witness among men of the blessedness of the elect. In his vision of the Word, therefore, he saw only what was necessary for that mission, and not all the mysteries reserved to the blessed, especially after the resurrection.

EN [72]

Q. 176, *a.* 2, *ad* 2*m.*

The body of this article (tertio. . . .) and the reply to the second difficulty make it apparent that the " gift of tongues " was not always that speech in foreign languages treated in article 1. It might also involve mysterious words, addressed to God alone, not understood by the hearers nor even, on occasions, by the speaker himself, and likely to give an impression of madness. As a matter of fact, it seems that two distinct phenomena took place in history: on the one hand, the real gift of expressing oneself in foreign languages, given to the Apostles by the miracle of Pentecost; and on the other hand, an ecstatic effervescence of a much lower order, which caused its recipients to give utterance to strange, interrupted, and more or less incoherent words, and which was perhaps largely derived from an imitation of pagan practices. This second form was particularly prevalent at Corinth, and Paul had to regulate it. Since these two extraordinary manifestations, in spite of their diversity, had points of similarity—the *strange* words of the second were often *foreign* words — it became common to confuse them. For this reason St. Thomas treated them under one heading, in accordance with the tradition. It is evident, however, that he perceived the difference. This is especially apparent in his *In I Cor. XIV*, in which he several times mentions these two possible meanings of " speaking in tongues. " See Allo, O.P., *Première Epître aux Corinthiens* (Paris, 1935), Excursus 15, " La ' glossolalie ' et le miracle des langues à la Pentecôte, " pp. 374-384, esp. p. 379, note 1, the texts from St. Thomas.

EN [73]

Ibid., ad 4m.

From this reply it can be seen that " interpretation of speeches " should not be reduced to " the gift of tongues, " but should actually be classified among the charisms pertaining to knowledge. The gratuitous gift which St. Thomas here mentions has as its function the explanation of those mysteries of Holy Scripture which are the most obscure, either by reason of the difficulty of the subjects treated, such as the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, etc., or because of the difficulty of the comparisons and parables used (see q. 173, a. 2, and Explanatory Note 34).

EN [74]

Q. 177, a. 1, ad 1m.

The art of oratory and the " gift of words, " which serves as a short title for the " word of wisdom " and the " word of knowledge, " are concerned with the same things: both aim to instruct, to please, and to move. But they differ in their point of departure and in the further end to be achieved. In the art of oratory the rules of rhetoric itself are the point of departure, and the end is gain or glory, peace or war, etc.; in the gift of words, the point of departure is a commission from the Holy Spirit, and the end is the edification of the members of Christ. Hence it happens that, if the preacher forgets his own proper point of departure or the end for which he is speaking, and puts all his effort into attracting a large audience, he sets up an obstacle to the divine liberality, which is ordered toward the bestowal of grace (cf. Cajetan, *Comm.*).

EN [75]

Ibid., ad 4m.

St. Thomas elsewhere specifies that the word of *wisdom* gives instruction in the divine mysteries, while that of *knowledge* has for its object created realities; see *C. Gent.*, III, 154; *In I Cor. XII*, lect. 2; *XIV*, lect. 2.

EN [71]

Ibid., ad 1m: " Apostolo arrepto... extra corpus esset, nesciebat. "

This was not the only lack of knowledge which prevented St. Paul's contemplation from being equal to that of the angels. St. Thomas, indeed, remarks (*De Ver.*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 6m) that he was raised to this rapture only in order that he might subsequently become a witness among men of the blessedness of the elect. In his vision of the Word, therefore, he saw only what was necessary for that mission, and not all the mysteries reserved to the blessed, especially after the resurrection.

EN [72]

Q. 176, a. 2, ad 2m.

The body of this article (tertio. . . .) and the reply to the second difficulty make it apparent that the " gift of tongues " was not always hat speech in foreign languages treated in article 1. It might also nvolve mysterious words, addressed to God alone, not understood ıy the hearers nor even, on occasions, by the speaker himself, and ikely to give an impression of madness. As a matter of fact, it seems hat two distinct phenomena took place in history: on the one hand, he real gift of expressing oneself in foreign languages, given to the Apostles by the miracle of Pentecost; and on the other hand, an ecstatic effervescence of a much lower order, which caused its recipients o give utterance to strange, interrupted, and more or less incoherent vords, and which was perhaps largely derived from an imitation f pagan practices. This second form was particularly prevalent t Corinth, and Paul had to regulate it. Since these two extraordinary nanifestations, in spite of their diversity, had points of similarity—the *trange* words of the second were often *foreign* words — it became ommon to confuse them. For this reason St. Thomas treated them nder one heading, in accordance with the tradition. It is evident, owever, that he perceived the difference. This is especially apparent n his *In I Cor. XIV*, in which he several times mentions these two possible meanings of " speaking in tongues. " See Allo, O.P., *Première Epître aux Corinthiens* (Paris, 1935), Excursus 15, " La ' glossolalie ' et le miracle des langues à la Pentecôte, " pp. 374-384, esp. p. 379, note 1, the texts from St. Thomas.

EN [73]

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Although he here rejects the word of *faith*, in other texts, following the lead of St. Paul (1 Cor 12: 9) he gives it a place among the *charisms* alongside of the two preceding gifts, and looks upon it as a particular excellence or certitude of the virtue of faith which enables the recipient to discourse on matters of faith with an altogether special accuracy and ability; see I-II, q. 111, a. 4, ad 2m; I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 4m; *In I Cor. XII*, lect. 2.

Finally, the spiritual delight which results from this certitude also gives faith a place among the *fruits of the Holy Spirit* (Gal 5: 23), as issuing particularly from the gift of understanding (I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 4m; q. 8, a. 8).

EN [76]

Ibid., a. 2 c: " Alio modo, publice alloquendo totam Ecclesiam. "

These two conditions are to be taken in combination. The abbess or prioress actually addresses her monastery, in chapter for example, *publicly*. She does not, however, speak *before the whole Church*, laity and clergy together, but only before a small determinate group, before one or a few persons.

EN [77]

Ibid., ad 2m: " ...ibi non est masculus et femina. "

A fortiori the beatific vision could not take account of any difference in sex. Women who have achieved greater charity than men will enjoy a higher degree of contemplation and glory; see III, q. 65, a. 1, ad 3m.

EN [78]

Q. 178, Prol. : " Deinde... de gratia miraculorum. "

We are not here dealing with miracles in general. St. Thomas has treated them in Part I, insofar as they pertain to God's omnipotence (q. 105, a. 6 and 8) and can be accomplished through the ministry of angels (q. 110, a. 4) or counterfeited by demons (q. 114, a. 4).

See also *De Potentia*, q. 6. Here the discussion will be restricted to the charism occasionally granted to men, as it is to angels, of being God's instruments in effecting miracles.

EN [79]

Q. 178, a. 1, ad 1m: " Utrolibet tamen modo... Deo voci hominis. "

In what sense should we understand this term " instrument " as St. Thomas uses it here? As instrument properly so called? Or should this term be taken in its broad meaning? Cajetan rightly observes (*Comm.*, n. II) that St. Thomas does not mean instrument in the strict sense: " He is here taking instrument as any secondary cause, whether it be a cause which by its own proper causality produces the very effect itself, or disposes for an effect, or a cause by way of merit. " In this sense, even an act of creation could have a creature as instrumental cause; for, although the power of creating cannot be communicated to another even instrumentally, man can antecedently place an act which, by reason of a divine disposition, calls for an act of creation. Cajetan concludes as follows:

> St. Thomas seems to wish to designate as an instrument a previous human act antecedently ordered by the eternal providence of God, after which God himself produces the miracle. God, then, is said to use this act instrumentally, for he has ordained that he would himself effect the miracle, either mediately or immediately, but in any case through the intermediary of this previous human act, whether this act be a prayer, a word, a speech, a touch, etc.

EN [80]

Ibid., a. 2, *ad 3m:* " Unde Augustinus dicit... publicae justitiae. "

For the interpretation of this text of St. Augustine, see I, q. 110, a. 4, ad 2m. If the world is considered as a large city, then to employ the power of particular creatures such as demons in order to accomplish prodigies is to make *contracts with private persons*. On the other hand, to work miracles while living according to divine justice, which is the law of this City of God, is to perform an act of *public justice*. But

to do so merely by invoking the name of Christ or by using the sacraments, without submitting oneself to this supreme law by a holy life, is to produce only *signs of that public justice.*

EN [81]

Ibid., ad 4m.

This reply of St. Augustine is sheer common sense, but often quite forgotten. Cajetan very correctly emphasizes it: "St. Augustine's observation is contrary to the opinion of the common people and to the general error of mankind. It is usually thought that men who perform miracles are saints and in some sense gods, while no esteem is given to those who are simply upright. Our view should be the direct opposite, for such is the truth."

PART II

Notes on Thomistic Doctrine

St. Thomas's treatise on prophecy is often used to clarify the notion of biblical inspiration, and has afforded many valuable insights It should be noted, however, that the " gift of prophecy " and " scriptural inspiration " are two distinct charisms, and that neither of them can be explained by the other without some adaptation. This fundamental observation has not always been kept sufficiently in mind, and as a result the subject has been obscured by confusions.

It seems advisable, therefore, to explain St. Thomas's doctrine for its own sake and as clearly as possible before we study its bearing on modern discussions.

A. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

In his works St. Thomas more than once touched on the subject of prophecy. His two principal treatises are in the *De Veritate*, q. 12, and in the *Summa Theologica*, II-II, qq. 171–174. Of secondary importance are shorter treatments which again deal with the essentials of the question, v.g., those in the *Contra Gentes*, III, 154 and in the *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, c. XIV, lect. 1 (with scattered observations in the following *lectiones)*. Finally, we can gather a large number of texts, particularly in the biblical commentaries, in which some particular aspect of prophecy is examined in passing. References to these parallels may be found in the various editions of the *Summa*, v.g., Marietti; we have used these passages in the Explanatory Notes. For the following synthetic exposition we shall draw chiefly on the treatise in the *Summa*, which represents the final alignment of the Master's thought on the subject, while also using the other works for certain particular points.

1. A SOCIAL CHARISM OF KNOWLEDGE

By " prophecy " St. Thomas understands essentially knowledge, supernaturally given to man, of truths exceeding the present reach of his mind, which God teaches him for the benefit of the community. It is, first of all, a *social* charism which imparts divine revelation to the world through the mediation of certain privileged persons upon

whose vision the faith, and consequently the rule of life, of others depends. The function of prophecy is to instruct the human race in "whatever is necessary for salvation" (*De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 2 c).[1]

Further, this gift is essentially a charism of *knowledge*. Consequently, it will involve words to give external expression to the prophet's message, and even actions, such as miracles and symbolic gestures, to confirm it (q. 171, a. 1; q. 173, a. 4; q. 174, a. 3 and 4). But primarily *(primo et principaliter)* it affects the prophet's mind. This fact differentiates prophecy from the "gift of tongues" (q. 176), the "gift of speech" (q. 177), and the "gift of miracles" (q. 178), all of them charisms which concern speech and action not merely as a resultant, but as their proper and primary effect.

For this reason St. Thomas places the effect of this charism in the intellect. When the objection is raised that prophetic inspiration ought to involve the will (q. 171, a. 1, obj. 4), he replies in the negative, and makes it an elevation of the mind (contrary to Cajetan, see Explanatory Note 5). Elsewhere he returns to this point: "Charitas . . . est perfectio voluntatis . . ., sed prophetia est perfectio intellectus" (q. 172, a. 2, ad 1m; see *ibid.*, a. 4 c). An intervention of the will, to be sure, is required after the message has been received in order to transmit it to others and to adapt it, with the help of the practical judgment, to their capacities and needs. But that is a further stage which St. Thomas does not consider when he is speaking of *prophecy* in the strict sense, *sc.*, the communication of the divine message to the mind of the inspired subject; it is one which pertains rather to the "gift of speech." But this further stage has a central place in *scriptural inspiration*. The latter influences the will and practical judgment of the writer as much as, and sometimes even more than, his intellect and speculative judgment. This is the first very important respect in which St. Thomas's doctrine on "prophecy" must be adapted if one wishes to extend it to "scriptural inspiration."

[1] In addition to this broad meaning, which is predominant in the systematic treatises, the *De Veritate* and the *Summa*, St. Thomas sometimes adopts a restricted meaning which limits the gift of prophecy to prediction of the future, and considers it a charism that "confirms" revelation (which he elsewhere calls prophecy in the wide sense) just as does the gift of miracles; see *C. Gent.* III, 154; *In I Cor. XII*, lect. 2; *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 172, a. 5, obj. 3.

2. IT DISCLOSES HIDDEN TRUTHS

The things which this gift manifests to the prophet are normally truths hidden to his mind, and which are not known to him except through supernatural intervention. St. Thomas often returns to this point, which he confirms by an etymology (incidentally, a false one) accepted in his own day. Prophecy makes " appear " *(phanos)* to the eyes of the prophet knowledge which is " distant " *(procul)* from his mind, either because its remoteness in time or place renders it inaccessible; or because, exceeding the natural range of reason (*supra naturalem rationem*, q. 171, a. 2 c), it belongs to the supernatural order (*visio quaedam alicujus supernaturalis veritatis*, q. 174, a. 5 c), and emanates from the divine knowledge (q. 173, a. 1 c; q. 174, a. 1 c), whence it is communicated to him " by way of instruction " (*per modum cujusdam doctrinae*, q. 171, a. 6 c). Thus the truths manifested in prophetic revelation may be either supernatural or natural according to their intrinsic formality *(quoad substantiam)*, but are always supernatural as regards their manner of acquisition *(quoad modum)* (see *supra*, p. 36).

This *hidden* quality of the truths disclosed by prophecy is so essential that prophecy is verified more or less completely according as the truths are more or less inaccessible to the prophet's mind. Thus it is realized most perfectly *(propriissime)* with regard to future events (see *supra*, p. 62, note 1) which, having as yet no existence except as possibles, are unknowable in themselves and to all men. It is realized in a lower degree when it concerns truths knowable in themselves, but which are actually unknown to the human mind because of its own weakness, such as the mysteries of the Godhead. And the degree will be lesser still if the things which it discloses to the prophet are accessible to reason, and in fact known to some men, but elude his mind only because of some particular contingency (q. 171, a. 3). [1]

In any case, however, prophecy discloses to the prophet something which he did not know. This is the condition which is necessary

[1] According to *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 7, a. 8, it would suffice, strictly speaking, if the truths were unknown merely to the contemporaries and hearers of the prophet, not to the prophet himself. But here we have a unique case which St. Thomas proposes solely to justify the title of prophet given by Scripture to Christ.

and sufficient in order that we may speak of prophecy in the proper sense.

3. *LUMEN* AND *SPECIES*

Since human knowledge always involves two distinct elements, the prophet can receive this supernatural instruction in either of two ways. On the one hand, there is the interior power which illuminates the object and causes one to form a judgment about it; this is called the intellectual light *(lumen intelligible)*, and constitutes the principal element. On the other hand, there are the representations *(species)* which furnish the subject-matter of the judgment: ideas, and, antecedently, sensations and images from which the ideas are abstracted; this is a necessary but secondary element, the role of which is rather material and preparatory to the judgment which is the formal term of knowledge (*completivum cognitionis*, q. 173, a. 2).

The prophet may be gratuitously favored regarding either of these elements, and receive from God either a supernatural light or infused representations, or even both. But the nature of his charism will differ accordingly (see Explanatory Note 35).

He will not be a prophet in the proper sense unless a new and supernatural light is granted to him, enabling him to judge " according to divine truth. " For judgment is the essential and specifying element in knowledge (*formale in cognitione prophetica est lumen divinum*, q. 171, a. 3, ad 3m). If, on the other hand, he receives only representations without light for interpreting them, he can be called a prophet only in an improper sense (*quiddam imperfectum in genere prophetiae*, q. 173, a. 2 c), or even not at all (*Pharao non est dicendus propheta*, *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 7 c). [1]

So essential is the light which causes the judgment that it can suffice by itself to characterize the true prophet and distinguish prophetic knowledge from all other types. [2] It is not necessary that

[1] Cf. *In Joan. XI*, lect. 7 (verse 51): Caiaphas " non magis potest dici propheta quam asina Balaam. "

[2] In *C. Gent.* III, 154, St. Thomas insists even more strongly than in the *Summa* on the preponderant importance of the light. Imaginative and sensory visions are presented only as " helps " which are " sometimes " *(aliquando)* granted in addition to the light. Of course, St. Thomas is here speaking formally of " divine revelation " and not of " prophecy, " which he makes just one of the " confirmations " of Revelation (see *supra*, p. 62, note 1).

the prophet himself should have received the representations concerning which he judges. Thus, Joseph was truly a prophet when he interpreted in God's name the visions of Pharaoh, whereas the latter was not a prophet, for he had received only visions without the light to understand them.

The maximum case is obviously that of the prophet whose mind receives from above both new representations and the power to judge about them (q. 173, a. 2; cf. III, q. 30, a. 3, ad 1m). But even here, prophecy varies in dignity according to the nature of these representations. Sensory visions are lower than imaginative visions, and these in turn are inferior to intellectual representations (q. 174, a. 2). Nevertheless, since the distinctive note of prophecy is to know hidden things only in a mysterious fashion, imaginative visions, although less excellent, are in general more proper to it (*ibid.*, ad 3m).

Finally, let us note that the visions which accompany the prophetic light do not necessarily involve the granting of entirely new representations. Often, even generally, it is sufficient that the divine action should rearrange natural representations which are already in the prophet's mind, images and even ideas (see Cajetan's *Commentary* on q. 173, a. 3) which he has previously acquired, so that these new groupings, under the influence of the prophetic light, may give rise to hitherto unknown truths which will comprise the object of his message. This explains why the visions of the most authentic prophets are often very close reflections of their experience and temperament, their past, and their political and social circumstances. In spite of their human origin these ideas of the prophet are truly supernatural, at least as regards their manner of acquisition, for they result from a new disposition of mental schemata which the prophet could not have produced by himself, but which is supernaturally effected by an intervention of God (q. 173, a. 2, ad 3m). Such ideas are in the last analysis of the same order as directly infused ideas, and belong to the same general class in which God gives the prophet both the light *(lumen)* and the representation *(species)*.

4. *LUMEN* WITHOUT *SPECIES*

Quite different is the case of the prophet who receives only a light without any sort of new representations. We have said that, since

the light is the formal element in knowledge, we can still speak of genuine prophecy in this case. But the question calls for further clarification.

If the visions are not granted to the prophet, but are granted to another who submits them to his judgment, the result is in effect the same as when he himself receives them: with his prophetic light he illuminates this supernatural data and discloses the hidden truths which God has deposited in it; in short, he truly does the work of a prophet. In this way Joseph explained the dreams of Pharaoh, Daniel interpreted the visions of Belshazzar, and, in a more general way, the Apostles and their disciples clarified the oracles of the Old Testament by the light of the Christian faith.

But another case is possible, namely that the supernatural light might be given to the prophet simply to make him judge in a divine way about human matters which were already represented in his mind, and to illuminate these naturally acquired representations without altering their intrinsically natural character. [1]

St. Thomas considers this possibility on several occasions, in the *De Veritate* (q. 12, a. 12; see also a. 7 and 13) and in the *Summa Theologica* (q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m; q. 174, a. 3). This is a matter of great importance, for the present case is one which occurs very frequently in Holy Scripture.

[1] This case may be compared, under the precise aspect we are here considering, with that of a hagiographer who writes about supernatural truths which have come to his knowledge through ordinary channels, such, for example, as St. Luke narrating the miracle of Pentecost. The truth with which he is dealing is formally supernatural, but he has discovered it through the normal and natural processes of human communication. No doubt, he needed supernatural faith in order to accept these accounts, but that is another matter. From the point of view which presently interests us, his case is certainly one of "light without infused representations," or, as we should say today, of "inspiration" without "revelation." It is not exactly the same as the case mentioned above of the prophet who judges about visions received by others (e.g., Joseph and Pharaoh, the Apostles and the oracles of the Old Testament), and who, thanks to his light, discovers more about them. The charism which St. Luke received merely enabled him to understand the revelation granted to others, and consisted principally in making him see that it ought to be written down and how it should be written. In short, his case pertains more to *scriptural* inspiration than to prophetic revelation; that is why St. Thomas does not here explicitly consider it.

One may still ask, to be sure, to what extent the essence of prophecy is verified in this case. As we have seen above, the distinctive note of prophecy is that it discloses remote and hidden truths. Can we still acknowledge prophecy in a charism which merely illuminates human and everyday truths with divine clarity?

Yes, in part, but not absolutely. St. Thomas himself speaks of this matter in a complex fashion. On the one hand he still places this case under the heading of *prophetica revelatio* (q. 173, a. 2 c) and calls it *prophetia intellectualis* (q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m), for this light causes the mind to judge according to divine truth (*secundum divinam veritatem*, q. 173, a. 2 c) with God-given certitude (*secundum certitudinem veritatis divinae*, q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m). But, on the other hand, he declares that it is inferior to a vision, even a merely imaginative one, which leads to the discovery of a supernatural truth. Following the lead of St. Jerome, he adopts the term "hagiographers" to distinguish these inspired persons from true "prophets." In another place he even says clearly that their case is "inferior to prophecy in the proper sense, for they do not attain to supernatural truth" (q. 174, a. 3 c).[1]

The reasons for these subtle distinctions are evident. To the extent that the prophetic light lends the judgment a new certitude of a supernatural order, we can say that the mind sees in a fresh light what it formerly thought it knew. It is somewhat as though it discovered these truths anew. Often this firmness of judgment, derived from the divine light, itself involves a real progress in knowledge: the mind thus fortified reasons and reaches conclusions with a speed and security which it would not have had if left to its own unaided power. Thus, thanks to the supernatural light, the mind discovers truths previously hidden to it, and in this way the hagiographer approaches the status of the true prophet.

But these truths still belong to the natural order, and for this reason the present case does not formally attain the level of prophecy in the proper sense. The judgment which is formed is not supernatural

[1] See also q. 171, a. 3, ad 2m, in which prophecy is contrasted with the other intellectual charisms because, unlike them, it can have no bearing on truths accessible to natural reason, but always concerns knowledge attainable only by divine revelation. Here St. Thomas is clearly speaking about "prophecy properly so called" in the strict sense.

except in an extrinsic way, *quoad modum*, by virtue of the light which evokes it and the certitude thereby conferred on it. It is not supernatural in an intrinsic way, *quoad objectum*, for the divine light does not alter the natural character of the concepts which it employs. In brief, this is a borderline case of the prophetic charism, and we can readily understand why St. Thomas scarcely stops to consider it in this treatise, in which he is studying rather the typical case of the prophet who receives from God a properly supernatural message.

Nevertheless, even if the hagiographers fall short of the prophets in quality, they exceed them in number. It can even be said that most biblical writers fall in the category of hagiographers, and modern biblical science has been chiefly concerned specifically with them. It is with reference to their case that efforts have been made to define scriptural inspiration by recourse to St. Thomas. It is, therefore, important to remark once again that his treatise on prophecy cannot be used for this purpose unless we read it in a slightly different perspective than that of the Angelic Doctor. Certain elements which he rather neglects have to be brought into prominence, and not all that he says about prophecy in the proper sense is applicable to biblical inspiration. By overlooking such fine points some authors have built up unacceptable theories leading to blind alleys.

5. INSPIRATION AND REVELATION

Consequent upon a text of Cassiodorus, which St. Thomas cites on several occasions (q. 171, a. 1, obj. 4; a. 3, obj. 1; a. 6, sed contra; q. 172, a. 2, obj. 3; a. 5, obj. 1; see q. 171, a. 4, obj. 2),[1] these two words have had a remarkable history in modern discussions. They have become a convenient means of distinguishing between the two cases we have just been studying. Today we speak of inspiration when the mind of the prophet receives only a light without representations, and of revelation when it receives both the one and the other.

[1] These two words appear in the citation as St. Thomas takes it from Peter Lombard's *Commentary on the Psalms* (*PL* 191, 58). See also the *Glossa ordinaria* (*PL* 113, 842). But the text of Cassiodorus himself, at least as given in the Migne edition (*PL* 70, 12), is a little different: "Prophetia est *aspiratio* divina, quae eventus rerum, aut per facta aut per dicta quorundam, immobili veritate pronuntiat."

Can the authority of St. Thomas be invoked in favor of this terminology? [1]

Yes, fundamentally, but with certain reservations. It is not found in his writings with that precise and almost technical clarity with which we understand the terminology today. For him the two terms, inspiration and revelation, do not designate two separate and mutually exclusive notions. They are rather two closely associated ideas which interpenetrate. The term "revelatio," indeed, is the one he ordinarily uses as an equivalent of the prophetic charism in general. He uses the term "inspiratio" much more rarely, and only for some special reason. A simple statistical fact is rather enlightening on this point. In the four questions, 171 through 174, the term "revelatio" (or its derivatives) appears no less than 106 times, of which 30 occurrences are in the stereotyped expression "prophetica revelatio," while the word "inspiratio" (or its derivatives) is found only 17 times. [2]

A) Revelation.

St. Thomas ordinarily uses the word "revelatio" because it expresses for him the essential note of prophecy: the disclosing of a truth which was unknown to the prophet. A "veil" hiding the unknown is drawn aside. The close connection between these two notions is well indicated by the composite expression "prophetica revelatio" which he uses so readily.

But we have seen that "prophecy" is sometimes taken by him in a wider sense to include cases which do not fall under prophecy in the proper sense. The same must be said of "revelation." St. Thomas continues to use this term even when there is no disclosure of any formally new truth, for example, in the case of the prophetic light granted by itself, without representations. Some very clear texts can be cited in this sense; for instance, q. 173, a. 2 c fin.: "Prophetica revelatio quandoque quidem fit per solam luminis influentiam, quandoque autem etiam per species de novo impressas vel aliter

[1] On this subject, see the remarks of P. Synave, O.P., in *Bulletin Thomiste* 2 (1925) [201]-[207].

[2] In *De Ver.*, q. 12, the totals are 66 (revelation) as opposed to 21 (inspiration).

ordinatas." [1] Whether the prophet has received new representations or merely a light, in either case St. Thomas sees "prophetic revelation."

Thus, just as he still speaks of the genus "prophecy" with regard to specific instances in which the definition is no longer fully verified, so too he speaks of revelation even when there is nothing properly "revealed." That is to say, he takes the word "revelatio" in a generic sense which does not involve the precise significance we assign it today. I am not familiar with a single text in which St. Thomas gives this term the restricted sense of a light accompanied by representations, *as opposed to* a light without representations.

B) Inspiration.

But what of inspiration, that other word which is found in the citation from Cassiodorus? Does it not have a more precise sense than revelation in the usage of St. Thomas?

Taken in itself, this term suggests a different aspect of the prophetic charism, *sc.*, not the discovery that results from it, but rather the divine influence which is its cause. "Inspiration" in fact signifies nothing but an influence coming from outside (*inspiratio significat quamdam motionem ab exteriori*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1), which is appropriated particularly to the person of the Holy Spirit when it comes from God, and which can produce its effect in the intellect or the will as the case may be. Since prophecy is a charism of knowledge, the inspiration which it involves will be primarily of the intellectual order as in the case of revelation (see Explanatory Note 5).

This is how St. Thomas explains the two terms in the only passage in which he expressly juxtaposes and undertakes to distinguish between them, q. 171, a. 1, ad 4m: inspiration is the antecedent influence which raises the mind above its ordinary level and endows it with greater intellectual vigor; revelation results from it, and is found in the judgment which is formed by the mind thus elevated, and by which it perceives divine truths.

Understood in this sense, inspiration always accompanies revelation and is a necessary prerequisite for it. The mind is unable

[1] See also *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 7, obj. 1; *concl. fin.*; ad 3*m eorum quae sunt in contrarium*; a. 12, obj. 10.

to discover divine mysteries unless it has first been reinforced from above. There is no revelation without inspiration. But can there be inspiration without revelation? No, if we restrict ourselves to prophecy in the proper sense, for this, as we have seen, necessarily involves some revelation. On the other hand, there is the case in which the mind is dealing with truths of the natural order, already known, and uses the supernatural light merely in order to judge about them with divine certitude. This case, as we have seen, does not really pertain to prophecy and is scarcely touched on by St. Thomas; he does not even call it "prophecy" or "revelation" except in a generic and improper sense. Does he then designate it by the word inspiration, as we do today? The matter is not quite settled, but we can sense that this word does not have such a definite meaning for St. Thomas.

Often he uses this term, in preference to "revelation," simply because of the context. This occurs when he contrasts the influence of God with that of the devil (q. 172, a. 6, seven times), or even merely with reason and other natural causes (q. 172, a. 1, ad 3m; q. 172, a. 3 c). Even in q. 174, a. 3 c, where the context would seem to lend special interest to the use of the term, "ex divina inspiratione" is actually opposed only to an implicit "ex humana ratione" and not to an "ex revelatione."

Two passages, nevertheless, seem to suggest that the word "inspiration" is used in a narrow sense for the precise case of a light without representations: they are in q. 174, a. 2, in the third objection and in the "sed contra." But this latter text is a citation from the Gloss, which cannot be taken as involving the terminology of St. Thomas. There remains the former text, in which he contrasts the hagiographers, *sicut ex inspiratione Spiritus Sancti scribentes*, with the prophets who received intellectual and imaginative visions. We may admit that there is here some authorization for the precise sense which modern authors give to the term "inspiration." [1] But

[1] We might also note in *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 12, the following passage: "quandoque . . . in prophetia non est aliqua supernaturalis acceptio, sed judicium tantum supernaturale; et sic solus intellectus illustratur sine aliqua imaginaria visione; et talis forte fuit *inspiratio* Salomonis, inquantum de moribus hominum et naturis rerum, quae naturaliter accipimus, divino instinctu ceteris certius judicavit."

it should be observed that even here St. Thomas does not contrast this "inspiration" of the hagiographers with a "revelation" of the prophets, as though this latter term normally meant for him the supernatural visions characteristic of the prophets. [1]

It is evident, then, that the terminology of St. Thomas does not perfectly coincide with that which we use today. If some texts seem to authorize our narrow sense of inspiration, *sc.*, light without representations, none of them clearly contains our narrow sense of revelation, light with representations. He always uses this latter term in a wide sense which includes both inspiration and revelation in the restricted sense.

But it does not follow that our modern distinction is not well founded in St. Thomas as regards the reality signified; that is the main point. He clearly formulated the distinction between the prophetic light accompanied by infused representations and the prophetic light without such representations as two possible types of the prophetic charism. This distinction is essential, and has been of great service in enabling modern discussions to advance beyond the impasse in which they were caught. When we designate these two types by the convenient labels of "revelation" and "inspiration," therefore, we are merely expressing St. Thomas's teaching and clarifying, by making slightly more precise, a terminology which was still rather unsettled in his own writings.

6. THE PROPHET'S AWARENESS OF HIS GIFT

Is the prophet necessarily conscious of the divine gift which is bestowed on him? In St. Thomas's opinion, no. Undoubtedly he often knows expressly that he owes such knowledge to God's influence; in many cases he has supreme certitude of that fact, and his hearers may base their belief upon that certitude. But it is also possible for him to be unaware of the divine gift, or at least uncertain about it, and to imagine that he is thinking by his own unaided powers. Since God is inspiring him, he is still a true prophet; but obviously his knowledge no longer possesses the same divine certitude as when

[1] Besides, in the parallel passage of *De Ver.*, q. 12, obj. 10, St. Thomas speaks of "revelatio" with reference to both categories.

he is fully conscious that he is receiving it from God.[1] Consequently such knowledge does not provide an equally solid basis for the faith of his hearers. Unless they have guarantees from another source (such as, for Catholics, the authority of the Church), they cannot help but be doubtful, just as he is and even more so, as to the fact that he is inspired. Hence this case, which St. Thomas calls " prophetic instinct " (q. 171, a. 5; cf. q. 173, a. 4), is in his opinion an imperfect instance of prophecy, *quiddam imperfectum in genere prophetiae.*

We should not hastily assume that this distinction coincides with that previously discussed (sections 3 and 4, *supra*), and say, for example, that the infusion of supernatural representations, in addition to a light, necessarily implies that the prophet is conscious of his charism, while the mere bestowal of a light without infused representations always leaves the mind in ignorance of its supernatural gift. Normally, of course, a prophet favored with visions would be aware of their charismatic origin. But even this does not seem to be necessary, especially in the case where the divine intervention merely gives a new arrangement to already acquired representations. Nor is it evident that in the other case, where a light alone is granted, the prophet is necessarily left in ignorance of his divine gift. Undoubtedly this will happen more frequently: the hagiographer, not having received any vision from above, will think that he is struggling and working alone, as the author of 2 Maccabees and St. Luke clearly give us to understand in their prologues. But we can also very well imagine a chronicler or poet who would be conscious of being impelled by the Spirit to write about historical events or the natural world (see Explanatory Note 49.)[2]

It would not be in any better agreement with the texts of St. Thomas to designate these two alternatives — awareness and unawareness — by the terms revelation and inspiration (see Explanatory Note 15, at the beginning).[3] In the two articles in which he treats of this point (q. 171, a. 5; q. 173, a. 4), St. Thomas does not even

[1] It should be noted, however, that the inspired subject is not prevented from having greater objective certitude in his knowledge simply because he is not subjectively conscious of his inspiration. Without being aware of the divine assistance, he nevertheless benefits from it.

[2] See also Synave in *Bulletin Thomiste* 2 (1925) [204].

[3] See also *ibid.*, p. [205].

once use the word "inspiration," but calls unconscious prophecy "instinctus propheticus." Moreover, "revelatio prophetica" in the beginning of q. 173, a. 4, includes the two cases of awareness and unawareness which are dealt with in the course of the article. If the prophet is able "to grasp only the object" *(quod solum apprehendat rem illam)* without knowing also that it is "revealed" to him *(haec sibi esse divinitus revelata)*, the implication is that this object is nonetheless "revealed" to him even though he is not conscious of the fact. At the beginning of q. 171, a. 5, where "expressa revelatio" is contrasted with "instinctus occultissimus," it is the word "expressa," not the word "revelatio," which indicates the conscious character of the first case.

In short, revelation, as we have defined it above following the lead of St. Thomas, can be either conscious or unconscious; the same is true of inspiration, which necessarily accompanies it. But it remains true that inspiration without revelation is a case that more easily verifies the idea of unawareness, while revelation is, more normally, conscious.

7. PERFECTIONS AND DEFECTS

We have seen that prophecy admits of grades, according to which it is more or less perfect: conscious or unconscious, accompanied by infused representations or unaccompanied by them, involving intellectual visions, imaginary visions, or even merely sensory visions. We must conclude, with St. Thomas, that, even where it is perfect in itself and fully verifies the notion of prophecy, it will be imperfect in its character of charism of knowledge, and in relation to the end to be attained, which is divine Truth.

The perfection of divine revelation will be realized only in heaven. In comparison with the beatific vision, the knowledge which prophecy gives is something very imperfect, *quiddam imperfectum in genere divinae revelationis* (q. 171, a. 4, ad 2m).

The fundamental difference is that prophecy does not make one see the divine essence in itself, but only through likenesses which are, as it were, its mirrors *(speculum aeternitatis)*, and which disclose only fragmentary aspects of divine Truth (q. 173, a. 1; I, q. 12, a. 11). Since it falls short of giving a vision of the Source, in which everything would be clearly seen, the prophetic charism must progressively unfold

as a succession of illuminations; these will be as many as there are partial truths. Hence it is essentially transitory (q. 171, a. 2), and supplies each prophet with only a limited number of supernatural insights, those which God judges suitable for his mission (q. 171, a. 4).

Moreover, prophecy is not a "gift of the Holy Spirit" in the strict sense,[1] but only a charism of an essentially social character (I-II, q. 68, a. 3, ad 3m), which does not call for personal sanctity in the prophet (q. 172, a. 4; cf. II-II, q. 6, a. 2, ad 3m). At most it demands that he should be of good moral character and possess certain natural dispositions; and these qualities can be divinely imparted at the time if the prophet does not have them beforehand (q. 172, a. 3).

The perfections and defects in prophecy can be brought out by a comparison with faith. Under one aspect prophecy is superior to faith; the former attains evidential certitude, while the latter must rely on the prophet's evidence to found its assent (q. 171, a. 3, ad 2m; and a. 5 with Explanatory Notes 11 and 15). It follows that prophetic knowledge has something more extraordinary, less proportioned to the natural powers of the human mind (q. 171, a. 2, ad 3m). If, however, these two types of knowledge are compared from the viewpoint of their object, which determines their intrinsic formality, the case is different. Prophecy does not give a vision of the same object which faith makes one believe. The object of faith is the very mystery revealed by God; its formal motive is the divine Truth itself which confers on the believer the supernatural power to adhere to this mystery (II-II, q. 1, a.; see q. 6, a. 1). The object of prophecy is only the revealed manifestation of this mystery, and its formal motive is the certitude that this manifestation is authentically divine. Through his vision the prophet indeed has evidence; this evidence, however, is only of the attestation by God of the truth to be believed, and not of this truth in itself, for such a "vision" could be nothing less than the beatific vision, which the prophet does not enjoy (q. 171, a. 2; q. 173, a. 1; see q. 5, a. 1).[2]

[1] St. Thomas sometimes classifies it among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, understood in the broad sense; e.g., *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 8, ad 2m.

[2] As M. Labourdette has well said: "La foi, à travers l'énonciation, fait adhérer au mystère divin; la prophétie fait voir que l'énoncé créé du mystère est attesté par Dieu" (*Revue Thomiste* 50 [1950] 413). I have corrected the present paragraph in view of the relevant criticisms of this theologian.

Just as any other believer, the prophet must make his act of faith; of course, the credibility of his object of faith is imposed on him in a different way — with direct and constraining evidence — but this does not affect the substance of his faith which remains the same as that of all believers. Since he attains the mystery to be believed only in the obliqueness of its charismatic manifestation, his charism of prophet is supernatural only "in its mode." On the other hand, not only his faith but the faith of all believers who rely on his testimony, attains the divine truth in itself, though imperfectly and obscurely; consequently, that faith is supernatural "in its very substance," and so is intrinsically superior to the charism of prophecy. [1]

This superior excellence of prophetic knowledge is due ultimately to God's direct and sovereign intervention, which it presupposes, in the mind of the prophet. And it is in this, likewise, that it differs from natural divination (q. 172, a. 1) and from the revelations which can be obtained, to some extent, from diabolical spirits (q. 172, a. 5). It owes to this divine origin its inability to teach anything untrue (q. 171, a. 6).

But the penalty for this excellence is that the human mind finds it difficult to adapt itself to such sublime knowledge. Separated from the mind of God by an infinite distance, it needs the ministry of angels to receive this message from above (q. 172, a. 2; cf. I, q. 111, a. 1). If, moreover, the revelation comes to it by means of imaginative visions, it will have to lose the use of the senses, either partially or totally as the case may be, in order to receive these visions (q. 173, a. 3). In any event, the human mind will never be anything but a "defective instrument" in the hands of God, and, even in the optimum case in which it has full awareness of having supernatural visions and a divine light for interpreting them, its knowledge will still fall short of the intentions of the Holy Spirit (q. 173, a. 4). There will always remain a certain margin by which the message surpasses

[1] The distinction "quoad modum" and "quoad substantiam" is here understood from the standpoint of intrinsic formal causality (according to the terminology most common in St. Thomas and the Thomist school), and not from the viewpoint of efficiency, which would lead to a reversal of the terms (as happens in q. 171, a. 2, ad 3m). From the aspect of efficiency, the act of prophecy surpasses the natural human powers more radically than does the act of faith (see M. Labourdette, *art. cit.*, pp. 409-411).

the messenger and retains infinite latent potentialities for all who hear and read it.

8. THE INSTRUMENTAL CHARACTER OF PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE

In modern discussions great importance has been attached to the *instrumental* role which the prophet plays in the hands of God. By applying this philosophical notion to the case of inspiration, recent theologians have drawn conclusions of far-reaching significance.

Now it is noteworthy that St. Thomas uses this idea with great reserve. He occasionally takes up this traditional figure, but only in secondary texts and, as it were, in passing (see *In Hebr. XI*, lect. 7; *Quodl. VII*, a. 14, ad 5m; a. 16 c fin.; *De Pot.*, q. 4, a. 1; *In Cant.*, Expositio altera, Prooemium). In the treatises in which he systematically studies the notion of prophecy, the idea of instrumental causality plays hardly any part at all. It does not appear anywhere in question 12 of the *De Veritate*, and in the *Summa* it is found only twice (q. 172, a. 4, ad 1m; q. 173, a. 4).[1] This reserve suggests that we should be circumspect and inquire to what extent the charism of prophecy is truly a case of instrumental causality.

In the precise and formal sense of the term (cf. III, q. 62, a. 1), an instrument does not have the source of its movement in itself. It acts, to be sure, according to its own nature, but only insofar as it is moved by the principal cause, whose power passes through it and makes use of its activity. This fact gives rise to two consequences, which may be regarded as signs of its status as an instrument: *(1)* it does not act all the time, nor (if it be a conscious agent) whenever it wills, but only when used by the principal cause; *(2)* the effect is not commensurate to its own form, but to that of the principal agent, which is the true cause.

Understood in this way, this notion of instrument is fully applicable to the sacraments, for example (in which connection St. Thomas makes much use of it), and also to miracle-workers (II-II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1m; *De Pot.*, q. 6, a. 4). Is it equally valid for the case of prophecy? Yes and no. The case is complex. While the first of the above-mentioned criteria is well verified here, the second is not absolutely fulfilled.

[1] In q. 172, a. 2, ad 3m, the discussion concerns the *angels* in their role of intermediaries; see likewise *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 8, ad 3m and 5m.

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(A) Let us first speak of the genuine prophet, who receives a light and forms a judgment. St. Thomas tells us that he receives the prophetic light as a *transient* and *imperfect* form (q. 171, a. 2 and 4). These are reservations which clearly distinguish the prophet's causality as regards his supernatural knowledge from that of ordinary men as regards their rational knowledge, or even that of believers as regards things known by faith. They make him much more strictly dependent on the divine Cause, and justify in large measure the designation of instrument which is applied to him.

(1) In the first place, the prophet does not use his charism whenever he wishes. The supernatural light is given to him only as a transient "passio" which is momentarily supplied to him, but does not belong to him (q. 171, a. 2). It is not a *habitus* which he uses at his pleasure, as an ordinary man uses his knowledge, or even a Christian his faith. He has to receive a new light each time God wishes to disclose anything to him *(semper indiget nova revelatione, ibid.)*, and this light can vary with the case (q. 174, a. 3, ad 2m; cf. *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 13, ad 3m *eorum quae sunt in oppositum*). His vision is fragmentary, intermittent, and fades out as soon as the ray from heaven ceases to enlighten it. The prophet is completely dependent on God's initiative both for the inception of his activity and for the whole duration of his actual prophetic knowledge. Now here we certainly have one of the features of an instrument: it acts only when moved by the principal cause, and receives from the latter not only an initial impulse, but a continuous influence upon which its own activity unceasingly depends. [1]

(2) Besides, the prophet does not receive the light from above in a perfect way, for it does not cause him to see the first principle of supernatural truths, which is the divine essence (q. 171, a. 2). It shows him only some of these truths, and does not reveal to him how they flow from this principle (q. 171, a. 4). He sees, but after the fashion of a disciple on whose mind the master imprints elements of his own knowledge without handing over to him the principles

[1] It is precisely on this question of the transitory influence that St. Thomas in *De Pot.*, q. 6, a. 4 c *fin.*, compares the charism of prophecy with that of miracles as graces of an instrumental character. See also *Sum. theol.* II-II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1m.

of that knowledge. The prophet's knowledge, then, in respect to the evidence of what he sees, ranks midway between faith and the beatific vision (see *supra* pp. 75-76).

But the object which he perceives is only a created and imperfect manifestation of the mystery. He sees in a mirror certain reflections of a light whose source still eludes him (q. 173, a. 1). Thus he is not as fully the cause of his own knowledge as when he knows natural truths by reasoning in the light of first principles.

In this way he verifies, at least partially, the second feature of any instrument: the effect of his activity, namely his knowledge, is not fully commensurate with his mind, even as elevated by the prophetic light, since he does not possess the principle which fully accounts for his own knowledge. This knowledge to some extent surpasses him and finds its complete explanation only in God's own light. Consequently, even on this score, the prophet cannot be called in the full sense the principal cause of his knowledge; he is rather its instrumental cause.

(3) Nevertheless we must here make a reservation which forbids us to liken him to an instrument pure and simple. However transitory and imperfect the prophet's possession of the supernatural light, it is none the less truly given to him in an intrinsic way, and so as to perfect him in himself. This is a crucial point, heavily stressed in St. Thomas's whole treatment. [1] The prophet actually receives this light in his intellect; it reinforces the natural light of his reason and becomes for him an active principle of knowledge. Once he has received it, and in so far as he makes use of it, he formulates with its help judgments which truly issue from him. His mind is first passively elevated by "inspiration," but then he actively perceives in the stage of "revelation" (we are here taking these terms in the

[1] Cajetan in turn frequently insists on this vital activity of prophetic knowledge. "Deus ... movet hominem rationali motu ad prophetiam .... Quod est contra illos qui putant prophetiam haberi quasi per influxum in intellectu sine nobis" (*Comm.* on q. 171, a. 1). The prophet's act of knowledge is supernaturally elevated "quoad substantiam actus"; but yet "hujusmodi actus quoad substantiam suam vere est hominis elevati, et vere causatur ab homine elevato, et vere est actus vitalis et ab intrinseco hominis elevati per divinum donum, sive habituale, ut in patria, sive per modum passionis, ut in proposito de prophetis dicimus" (*Comm.* on q. 171, a. 2, n. VIII).

sense of St. Thomas in q. 171, a. 1, ad 4m).[1] Whether he is favored with a purely intellectual vision or perceives infused images illuminated by a prophetic light, or even if he only receives a supernatural light by which to form judgments about things naturally known (see Explanatory Note 35) — in any case, he reacts vitally in the act of judging, and sometimes also by producing intelligible species which must be formed before he can judge.

We must therefore supplement what has been said in the preceding paragraph, and acknowledge that the effect of the charism, *sc.*, prophetic knowledge, is nevertheless in great measure commensurate with the prophet's mind. Between this mind and this knowledge there is a relation altogether different, for example, from that between a sacrament and the grace which it produces, or even between the act of a miracle-worker and the absolutely disproportionate effect which flows from it.

In these circumstances, it is no longer possible to speak of instrumental causality in the proper sense. John of Saint Thomas does not hesitate to say that the prophet is *principal cause* of his own knowledge.[2] This mode of speaking is perfectly legitimate so long as one maintains that he is *secondary* principal cause in quite special subordination to the first cause.[3] If, on the other hand, in order to emphasize this subordination, the prophet be termed *instrumental cause,* this also is a legitimate way of speaking, provided the term be understood in a *broad and improper sense* which St. Thomas is

[1] Cf. *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 1, ad 1m *eorum quae sunt in contrarium:* " Prophetia . . . quantum ad ipsam visionem prophetae est actus quidam mentis; quantum vero ad lumen, quod raptim et quasi per modum pertranseuntis recipitur, est similis passioni prout in intellectiva parte receptio passio dicitur. "

[2] " Lumen propheticum etiam est qualitas constituens intellectum ut causam principalem cognitionis propheticae " (John of St. Thomas, *Cursus, Theologicus, De Incarn.*, q. 9, a. 2, no. 27; ed. Vivès, VIII, 318). See P. Synave, " La causalité de l'intelligence humaine dans la révélation prophétique, " *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 8 (1914) 223 ff.

[3] Here I am correcting my first edition after M. Labourdette in *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950) 417. According to A. Bea, " Die Instrumentalitätsidee in der Inspirationslehre, " *Studia Anselmiana* nos. 27-28 (1951) 63, Henry of Ghent for the same reason avoids considering the sacred writers as instruments and prefers to call them " auctores secundarii et ministeriales. " Bea, however, feels he should maintain an instrumentality " im vollen und eigentlichen Sinn " (p. 61 f.).

very familiar with, and even uses many times. In this wider sense *(magis communiter)*, he tells us (*De Ver.*, a. 24, a. 1, ad 5m), any cause which acts through being moved by another, even though it has within it the principle of its own activity (and whose effect is consequently connatural and commensurate with itself) is called an instrument. This, he adds, is the case of the human mind which, even though moved by God, nevertheless moves itself and acts freely.[1] Such an extended meaning of the term makes allowance, in our present case, for the genuinely human, intelligent, and free character of prophetic knowledge, and permits us to apply to it the term "instrumental cause." This terminology is better since it indicates that in its exercise prophetic knowledge is more dependent than the other types of human knowledge, whether in the order of natural reason, or faith, or glory.

(B) Hitherto we have been speaking of true prophecy, by which the prophet, favored with a supernatural light, actually comes to know what God manifests to him.[2] But there are instances in which this perfect form of prophecy is not fulfilled, either because the inspired subject receives no supernatural light, but only sensory or imaginative visions which he does not understand; or because, even in a genuine prophet, the light which is granted to him has limited efficacy and does not disclose to him all that the Holy Spirit has put into the vision (on the question of secondary senses, see *infra*, p. 149 f.).[3] In

[1] As a matter of fact St. Thomas many times in his works uses this broad and improper sense when he is speaking of creatures acting under the divine influence; e.g., "Anima nostra operatur sub Deo sicut agens instrumentale sub principali agente" (*C. Gent.* III, 149). See Synave, *art. cit.*, p. 227 ff.

[2] Moreover, we have also considered the case of the typical "prophet" contemplating supernatural truths. All this is certainly applicable to the "hagiographer," who is likewise equipped with a supernatural light. But it should be observed that the latter, in judging supernatural truths (we are presently considering him in the restricted sense of q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m; but see Explanatory Note 47), possesses within him the principle of his knowledge. On this score it may be said that he is more like a principal cause.

[3] We are not here speaking of the subjective consciousness of being inspired, which may be lacking in the prophet (q. 171, a. 5). This defect is one of the consequences of the imperfect nature of his charism, and emphasizes the instrumental aspect of his knowledge (*supra* pp. 78-79); but it in no way alters the vital and truly human character of his knowledge in the objective order. See Synave, *art. cit.*, p. 231 ff.

these two cases the prophet's mind no longer forms a judgment or elicits a vital act of knowledge. It can therefore be said that he is now an instrument in the proper sense with respect to those truths which elude him and with which his mind is not commensurate. [1]

But it will be noted also that in these cases we no longer have "prophecy" except in a very improper sense, or even not at all. St. Thomas states clearly that one who receives only representations without light is not a prophet (q. 173, a. 2; *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 7; Explanatory Note 35 and p. 64); and he even says of the true prophet that he ceases to deserve this title when he no longer understands what he is seeing, saying, or doing. [2]

Now it is only when speaking of this case of prophecy in an improper sense that St. Thomas, in the *Summa*, calls the prophet a "defective instrument," that is, when there is question of hidden senses of which he is unaware (q. 173, a. 4); [3] and when in his other works he makes use of this idea of instrumental cause, it is generally in connection with this same matter of the prophet's defects. [4]

[1] See *ibid.*, p. 233 ff.

[2] *In Hebr. XI*, lect. 7: "Hoc est ergo de ratione prophetæ quod cognoscat illud quod videt, vel dicit, vel facit. Quando autem non cognoscit, non est vera propheta, sed participative tantum." *De Ver.*, q. 12, a. 10, ad 14m: "Jonah . . . quantum ad hoc quod non intelligebat, propheta non fuit."

[3] In q. 172, a. 4, ad 1m, the other text of the *Summa* which must be taken into account here, the prophets are called "instrumenta divinae operationis" to the extent that they receive their gift only "ad utilitatem aliorum," without being helped by it "propter propriae mentis illustrationem." Whether we understand by these last words the enlightenment of their minds, or, better, in view of the subject matter of the objection, the holiness of their souls, the fundamental thought remains the same: they are "instruments" to the extent that the divine influence passes through them as through a passive channel, without producing a vital reaction in them.

Likewise in q. 177, a. 1 c *fin.*, the tongue of the sacred orator is an "instrument" in relation to the conversion of his hearers, an effect of grace which does not come from him, but from God, who alone can operate "interius."

[4] See e.g., *In Hebr. XI*, lect. 7, which is closely parallel to q. 173, a. 4; *Quodl.* 7, a. 14, ad 5m and a. 16, where there is question of justifying the spiritual senses of Scripture which were not conceived by the sacred author; *De Pot.*, q. 4, a. 1, where there is question of accommodated senses which he could not have foreseen; *In Cantic.*, Expositio altera, Prooemium, where St. Thomas clearly declares that he is going to explain the spiritual senses, and is therefore little concerned with the human author, a mere instrumental cause.

This very remarkable fact is a strong confirmation of the foregoing conclusions. In short, St. Thomas, who likes to use terms in their formal meaning, rarely calls the prophet an instrument of the Holy Spirit except when he can use this expression in its proper and rigorous sense, i.e., when there is question of secondary and hidden meanings to which his light does not extend. But when he is speaking of a true prophet in the full exercise of his knowledge, he prefers to avoid this term, which would no longer be applicable except in a broad sense.[1]

It is well to keep all these points in mind, and not to use this philosophical analogy without caution and discretion. In itself, the term is flexible and unstable; it must be adapted to the concrete case. It will be fruitful if we apply it with due regard for the peculiarities of the matter which it is intended to explain; in the present case, it is the activity by which God actuates the human mind without doing violence to its proper mode of operation. But the term is dangerous if one claims to use it according to its strict meaning and then, rather than adapting it as needed, violently forces the theological facts to fit the term. Such a method would lead to awkward consequences, as we shall see below in dealing with the theory of Cardinal Franzelin.

[1] When one considers the Sacred Book, the product of the charism of scriptural inspiration, the matter of secondary senses takes on greater importance; it is a regular thing for God, the author of the whole Bible, to go beyond the sacred writer (see *infra*, p. 118 f.). In this case, the idea of instrument applies in its proper sense; St. Thomas himself, too, prefers it in his biblical commentaries.

B. SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION

I. THE EXISTENCE OF SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION

A) The Existence of Inspired Books.

It is an accepted fact in the Jewish and Christian religions that there exist books inspired by God which, for this reason, are called "sacred," "Holy Scripture." They are also called "canonical" because they are contained in the two "Canons" of the Old and New Testament.

By "inspiration" is meant that these books were composed under a special influence of the Holy Spirit. It was at God's bidding that Moses wrote the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex 24: 4 ff.; 34: 27), that Jeremiah committed to writing the oracles of Yahweh (Jer 30: 2; 36: 2), or that the Seer of Patmos drafted his Apocalypse (Ap. 1: 1 ff.; 22: 6 ff.).

Thus Jewish tradition[1] accepted a certain number of works as coming from God, and these it assembled into an authoritative tripartite collection (the Law, the Prophets, and other Writings). These are the *Kitvê Haqqodesh* of the Rabbis, books so holy that they "soil the hands," that is, after handling them a man must wash his fingers before touching any profane object. Likewise the

[1] See J. B. Frey, "La révélation d'après les conceptions juives au temps de Jésus-Christ." *Revue Biblique*, New Series 13 (1916) 480 ff.

Hellenistic Jews such as Philo and Josephus speak of them as " sacred writings, " the product of a " divine inspiration, " κατὰ τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1: 7, 57).

The Church received these Scriptures, as well as faith in their inspired character, from the Synagogue. [1] Jesus cited them as the word of God (Mt 22: 31; Mk 7: 13; Jn 10: 34 ff.) which must be entirely fulfilled (Mt 26: 54; Lk 24: 44 ff.). His Apostles and their disciples followed his teaching: it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through the mouth of David, says St. Peter (Acts 1: 16; 4: 25), or of Isaiah, says St. Paul (Acts 28: 25). They argued from Scripture as from a divine authority (Rom 3: 2; 1 Cor 14: 21; Heb 3: 7; 10: 15; etc.). Two New Testament texts are particularly explicit about the fact and nature of inspiration: according to 2 Tim 3: 16, all Scripture (πᾶσα γραφή referring to the ἱερὰ γράμματα of the preceding verse) is inspired by God (θεόπνευστος to be taken in the passive sense), whence comes its normative value; and 2 Pt 1: 21 specifies that the prophets, or in general the men of God (who composed the Sacred Books), acted not on their own initiative, but " under the influence of the Holy Spirit. "

Moreover, the Church soon added her own Scriptures to those of the Synagogue. Had she not received from Christ the fullness of the Spirit and of Revelation? The New Testament took its place alongside the Old, worthy of equal respect as regards inspiration (cf. 2 Pt 3: 16), and superior to it as regards its object (cf. 2 Cor 3: 4 ff.).

The Fathers received this collection of Sacred Writings from the hands of the Church; and they vied with one another in eulogizing their inspired character, affirming that God is their true author, that he " dictated " them to the human authors. They employed numerous figures to illustrate the subordinate role of the human authors; they are " instruments " in the service of God, " zithers " and " plectrums " which pulsate under the hand of God, " mouths " of the Holy Spirit, etc.

The official teaching of the Church's Magisterium has continually repeated and clarified this fundamental doctrine. From the Canon

[1] As is well known, the Church took over from Hellenistic Judaism the " Alexandrine Canon, " which includes several books more than the " Palestinian Canon. " These books are sometimes called " deutero-canonical, " and are rejected by Protestants as " apocryphal. "

of St. Damasus (4th Cent.), adopted by the Decree of Gelasius (5th Cent.), until the Vatican Council and the latest Encyclicals, the Church has unfailingly affirmed that the Sacred Books listed in the Canon of Scripture were composed under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and that consequently they have God for their author, a fact which makes them eminently authoritative in matters of faith.

Thus the Council of Florence declares: "Unum atque eundem Deum Veteris et Novi Testamenti, hoc est Legis et Prophetarum atque Evangelii, profitetur auctorem, quoniam eodem Spiritu Sancto inspirante utriusque Testamenti sancti locuti sunt..." (*DB* 706; *EB* 32 [47]). The Council of Trent repeats and develops this doctrine in its *Decree on the Canonical Scriptures* (*DB* 783 f.; *EB* 42-45 [57-60]). So, too, the Vatican Council: [Libri integri V. et N.T.]... "Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti Deum habent auctorem" (*DB* 1787; *EB* 62 [77]). These decisions are once more inculcated by *Providentissimus* (*DB* 1952; *EB* 110 [125]).

B) The Criterion of Scriptural Inspiration. [1]

But how are we to know which books God inspired? As we have said, it is the Church which teaches this, and we cannot do otherwise than submit to her authority. This is a matter of faith.

In point of fact, it is clear that, since inspiration is a charism of the supernatural order, by definition it lies beyond the reach of reason and experience. God alone knows whether he inspires and whom he inspires. The prophet himself, or the sacred writer, is not necessarily conscious of it (see *supra*, p. 72 f.). And even if he knows and says so, we cannot accept his testimony as a sufficient proof, under pain of falling into a vicious circle; he must at least give some external signs of his supernatural mission. What are we to do if the author is unknown, remote, or if he has not furnished any such signs?

Some have tried to argue from the exceptional qualities of Scripture: its majesty and the sublimity of its teachings, its beauty and richness, the light and warmth which it radiates — all so many

[1] See M. J. Lagrange, O.P., *Histoire ancienne du canon du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1933), pp. 171-75.

signs which touch the heart with unmistakable force. This is how the Lutherans argue. But it is immediately obvious that such a subjective criterion could not suffice. It is deceptive, and some uninspired works could be cited which are more instructive and moving than many books of the Old Testament or even some of the New.

Others have suggested an appeal to the divinely guided function of the sacred author. Thus the apostolic character of a New Testament writer would of itself be a sufficient guarantee that the book is inspired. But, besides the fact that this criterion is very hard to apply to the Old Testament, it does not seem justified even for the New. Of course it contains an element of truth. The Church actually did establish her Canon of the New Testament by such considerations: she kept the books which came to her from Apostles, or from disciples of the Apostles, and rejected the others. But for the Church herself this historical consideration was only a human and contingent preliminary to her dogmatic decision, an investigation in the natural order which was as different from her declaration of faith as are the schemata and discussions of a Council from the resultant infallible definition. The fact is that between the stage of human inquiry and that of dogmatic promulgation there intervenes the action of the Holy Spirit which guarantees the defined truth against all error. [1]

Thus consideration of the prophetic or apostolic character of an author can be at most, even for the Church, only a criterion of the natural order and one which is extrinsic to the dogma of inspiration. A fortiori, it cannot be a sufficient norm to serve as basis for the belief of the ordinary faithful who must submit to the Church and found their faith on the traditional and defined belief of the supreme Magisterium—a belief which is itself based on the divine mission and the assistance of the Holy Spirit which the Church has received from Christ. This, in a word, is the sole legitimate guarantee of the supernatural fact of inspiration.

[1] This pertains to the charism of *infallibility*, which must be carefully distinguished from the charism of inspiration, of which we are speaking in this treatise; see however *infra* p. 165, note 2. On the natural kinship binding the Sacred Scriptures to the Church and guiding it in its determination of the Canon, see the interesting reflections of K. Rahner, "Über die Schrift-inspiration," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 78 (1956) 163-65.

It is also the only safe one. If, *per impossibile*, critical investigation were one day to succeed in proving that a certain writing of the New Testament came neither from one of the Apostles nor from one of their immediate disciples, even then the Christian's faith would have no reason to be disturbed. The Church had her reasons, basically supernatural, for admitting this book into her Canon; it is not up to the believer to ask what these reasons were. He has only to believe on the word of the Church that, even in this book, it is God who is speaking.

2. THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

On the basis of the data of faith described above, theology has long tried to evolve the notion of scriptural inspiration. But not all of these attempts have been equally successful.

The fundamental problem is to discover how the concurrence of divine and human activity is realized in practice. Solutions have fluctuated between two opposite extremes, depending upon whether the emphasis is placed on the part of God or on that of man in the composition of the book.

A) False Notions.

The early Lutherans and some Renaissance Scholastics took too literally certain figures employed by the Fathers and hence reduced the sacred writers to the merely passive role of copyists writing at God's "*dictation.*"[1] For them inspiration was like "revelation" in the strict sense, whereby the entire book, complete with ideas and words, descended from heaven into the mind of the

[1] We should be careful, moreover, not to understand the word "dictation," every time it appears in the writings of the early theologians, in the sense of "purely passive dictation," i.e., "revelation" of the very words of God. This would be to caricature the traditional doctrine of the Thomistic school (see J. M. Vosté, O.P., *De divina inspiratione et veritate Sacrae Scripturae* [ed. 2a; Rome, 1932] p. 81 ff., note; pp. 98-100]. The term "dictare" does not necessarily have, and did not have for the older authors, the restricted meaning which we give it today. Forcellini's *Lexicon* lists as equivalent expressions, not only "lente pronuntio id quod alius scribendo excipiat," but also "lubens dico, compono, praescribo, doceo, suadeo, suggero, pronuntio" (see A. Bea, S.J., *De Scripturae Sacrae inspiratione* [ed. 2a; Rome, 1935] p. 28).

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writer, in somewhat the same way as Mohammedans even today conceive the revelation of the Koran to Mohammed. It is easy to see the dangerous consequences of such an idea: the sacred book is presented as an absolute, and God is entirely responsible even for the imperfections. To say nothing of the diversity of ideas and points of view in the Bible — of which the theologians of that time were hardly aware — how can this system explain such a simple and patent fact as the diversity of styles? It would be a rather naive solution to answer that God was careful to use different styles in dictating to the various authors in order to imitate the diversity of human personalities.

Others understandably wanted to shake off the yoke of such a narrow conception. But several theologians did this imprudently and went to the other extreme. For them the sacred writer, completely on his own initiative, composed his work by himself just like any other human author. Inspiration was now nothing but a simple negative assistance which merely prevented him from falling into error, or even a subsequent approbation by which God approved an accomplished fact and in some way appropriated to himself a work which had been written by a man.

This was to surrender too much. According to such solutions God was no longer truly the author of Scripture as understood by the faith of the Church.

B) Decisions of the Church's Magisterium.

And so the Vatican Council condemned as erroneous the systems of negative assistance and subsequent approbation: these books " the Church holds as sacred and canonical, not because, having been composed by human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority; nor only because they contain revelation without errors, but because, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God for their author and have been handed on as such to the Church " (*DB* 1787; *EB* 62 [77]). *Providentissimus* repeats this condemnation.

The Magisterium, however, did not stop at these negative condemnations. It affirmed explicitly what the dogma of Inspiration demands: that the Sacred Books be composed entirely under the

positive influence of the Holy Spirit. *Providentissimus* especially emphasized the extent of this divine influence, enumerating therein the three psychological steps involved in the composition of a book: the Holy Spirit has acted on the intellect of the human author in order that he might conceive with certitude what God was ordering him to write, on his will in order that he might will to write it faithfully, and on his executive faculties so that he might express it in a suitable fashion and with infallible truth.[1] Later, *Spiritus Paraclitus* repeated this three-fold analysis of inspiration in similar terms, showing that this traditional view had already been held by St. Jerome.[2]

But if the Church clearly affirmed the essential point of her doctrine, she did not claim to define in minute detail the way in which inspiration directs the human faculties; she left it up to the theological schools to clarify this point in free discussions.[3]

In the debates which followed, two principal theories came into conflict. One was mainly the work of Cardinal Franzelin, an eminent theologian of the Society of Jesus; the other advocated a more complete return to the doctrine of St. Thomas and was supported especially by Father Lagrange, O.P. We must now examine these two points of view, for it is not a question merely of a scholastic quibble, but actually of two mentalities approaching the problem of Scripture with different perspectives.

[1] " Nam supernaturali ipse (Spiritus Sanctus) virtute ita eos (*sc.*, scriptores inspiratos) ad scribendum excitavit et movit, ita scribentibus adstitit, ut ea omnia eaque sola, quae ipse juberet, et recte mente conciperent, et fideliter conscribere vellent, et apte infallibili veritate exprimerent: secus, non ipse esset auctor Sacrae Scripturae universae " (*DB* 1952; *EB* 110 [125]).

[2] *EB* 461 [448]: " Cernere licet, inter Hieronymi verba et communem de inspiratione catholicam doctrinam nihil omnino interesse, cum ipse teneat, Deum, gratia collata, scriptoris menti lumen praeferre ad verum quod attinet 'ex persona Dei' hominibus proponendum; voluntatem praeterea movere atque ad scribendum impellere; ipsi denique peculiariter continenterque adesse, donec librum perficiat. "

[3] Though in their formulation the Vatican Council and the Encyclical *Providentissimus* used the works of Cardinal Franzelin, who will be mentioned below, they never wanted to give sanction to the debatable detail of his opinions. See G. Courtade, " J.-B. Franzelin. Les formules que le Magistère lui a empruntées, " *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 40 (1952) 317-25.

C) Cardinal Franzelin's Opinion.

As early as 1870[1] Franzelin had proposed a solution midway between the contrary extremes mentioned above. Distinguishing between the formal and material elements in a book, the ideas and the words, he adopted the new theory of simple negative assistance for the latter, but maintained the old theory of real intellectual dictation for the former. The sacred writer received from God the entire content of his book: ideas, thoughts, judgments. Even those portions of the contents which he might already possess naturally from his own previous experience had to be, as it were, suggested to him anew and in some way " revealed " (in a wide sense) by a special, supernatural illumination. Only the words and phrases, in short, the literary clothing, escaped this divine influence; the writer discovered them by himself and was aided in his task only by a simple assistance from God which prevented the words from being unfaithful to the thought.

The key idea which governed this solution was that God must be truly the *Author of Sacred Scripture*. This is Franzelin's point of departure, the dogmatic axiom which he wishes to analyse. Now for someone to be the author of a book it is necessary and sufficient for him to have conceived all its ideas and to have ordered their recording in writing; it is not necessary for him personally to have supervised the actual drafting of the work down to the smallest details; he can leave that for some secretary. In the same way, in order that God be legitimately called the author of Sacred Scripture, it is necessary and sufficient for him to have conceived and willed all the ideas; as for their verbal formulation, he has entrusted that to the care of the human authors, leaving to them a certain latitude in the matter.

At first this solution enjoyed great popularity. It seemed to explain the diversity of styles, and even of ideas, which distinguish the different books of Scripture. And at the same time it safeguarded the properly divine origin of their content.

But precisely on this last point the solution was just as inflexible as were the older systems on the " dictation " of Scripture. By requiring that each idea in the Book be proposed to the mind of the writer

[1] *Tractatus de divina traditione et Scriptura* (ed. 4a; Romo, 1896) p. 304 ff.

by God himself, whether by means of a new infusion or by a supernatural recall, Franzelin attributed to these ideas an absolute character which seemed hardly in keeping with reality. Each phrase of the Bible contained a divine truth, conceived in some sort by the mind of God, which must be accepted as a kind of "revelation." Such an abstract and theoretical view was scarcely compatible with a concrete study of the Bible.

Moreover this system seemed questionable as regards its philosophical and theological presuppositions. How was it possible, within the framework of a valid psychology, to conceive how God communicates ideas to the mind without the intermediary of words? Our thought has its origin in the senses, and its most interior mechanism cannot dispense with verbal images. It is, therefore, difficult to conceive how God can suggest ideas, while leaving to the man the task of discovering the literary expression by himself.

This philosophical difficulty is, moreover, simply the consequence of a deeper theological notion. Franzelin thus disassociates the interior activity of thought and its external manifestation because he needs two areas in which the two causes, divine and human, may each exercise its activity like two juxtaposed causes. This is a curious theory of divine and human concurrence, one which belongs to a whole theological system and which flows more proximately from the strict, univocal way in which he applies the notion of instrumental causality to the case in point.

In the concurrence of the divine and human activities he considers only two possible cases: [1] *(1)* either the man is an *instrumental cause*

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 316 ff.: "Distinguimus *causam primam* sine cujus concursu *causa secunda* agere nequit, *causam per se* deinde, quae etiam dicitur *principalis*, agens nimirum sua inhaerente virtute in distinctione a *causa instrumentali*, quae non inhaerente sibi virtute agit sed dumtaxat ex motione (uti aiunt) h.e. ex virtute derivata et transeunte causae principalis. Iam dum dicitur *auctor libri*, nunquam intelligitur efficientia dumtaxat per concursum generalem *causae primae*, nec sensu proprio efficientia *causae instrumentalis*; sed semper significatur *causa per se*, quae potest esse *prima* vel *secunda*. Habitudo vero inter has duas causas est hujusmodi. Si Deus (causa prima) dicitur *auctor* (adeoque *per se causa*) *libri*, excluditur *causa secunda* agens ut *causa per se* h.e. virtute propria sibi inhaerente; unde vicissim si homo (causa secunda) sensu proprio est et dicitur *auctor libri*, eo ipso negatur Deum (causam primam) esse *libri auctorem*, non tamen excluditur, ut per se constat, generalis concursus causae primae, qui nullatenus importat Deum esse *auctorem libri*, nisi absurde

and then, like every real instrument, he does nothing by his own power but solely by the divine influence which uses him; in other words he receives everything from God and completely loses his autonomy; *(2)* or else the man is a *principal cause,* who acts by himself, while God moves him only according to the ordinary concurrence of the First Cause with every secondary cause.

Beyond these alternatives Franzelin does not consider a third possibility — one which we shall develop later on — whereby the man receives a special, positive influence from God (different from the "ordinary concurrence," and hence a charism), but nevertheless acts freely by himself. In this case he might be called a *dependent principal cause* or an *instrumental cause in the broad, improper sense.*

Since he does not consider this possibility, Franzelin is forced by his alternatives to effect a compromise between the two authors, divine and human, of the Sacred Book.[1] (a) *In the domain of ideas* God must be the principal cause in the proper sense (and not only in the capacity of First Cause) in order to be truly the author of the book; the man then can be only a passive instrument in this regard; he must receive all his ideas from God, even those which he could already have acquired previously by his own resources. (b) On the contrary, *in the domain of words,* where it is no longer necessary for God to be the author, the man can now become the principal cause, and make his own choice of expressions, receiving from God only the extrinsic assistance required to guarantee his work and prevent him from falsifying the thought. Thus God and man are both the authors of the book, but on different levels: God is the author with respect to the content, man with respect to the form.

D) Principles of a Thomistic Solution.

Some theologians thought that the doctrine of St. Thomas, followed integrally, might offer the elements of a better solution, based on a different conception of the concurrence of divine and human causality. St. Thomas himself had outlined a concrete application to the case of prophecy. By starting out from this properly

loquendo Deum dicere velis auctorem omnium librorum. Sive vero Deus sive homo sit *auctor libri,* in neutra hypothesi excluditur *causa instrumentalis,* per quam causa principalis (Deus vel homo) agat et efficiat sui libri existentiam."

[1] *Ibid.,* p. 319 ff.

theological notion rather than from a human concept such as that of author, they believed it possible to reach conclusions more faithful to the specific peculiarities of scriptural inspiration. [1]

1) *The Sacred Author as God's "Instrument."*

There is no doubt that St. Thomas, in line with the whole Christian tradition, compares the sacred author to an "instrument" in the hands of God, but that analogy must be flexibly conceived in terms of the particular case of divine and human concurrence, and not in a rigid, univocal way which would liken man to a sheerly material instrument. For the idea comes up here only as a philosophical illustration in the service of a theological doctrine. [2] It has the advantage of using a comparison traditional with the Fathers; but it labors under the serious handicap of being vague and subject to various applications. We have shown above (p. 77) that it can be taken either in a rigorous and formal sense, or in a wider and improper sense. Now it is in the latter sense that St. Thomas here understands it. For him, only the imperfect prophet, who sees certain things without understanding them — or even a true prophet with respect to the secondary senses which he does not foresee — would be an instrument in the proper sense. But in other cases of genuine prophecy, that is, when the inspired person truly knows and forms his judgment under the influence of God, he cannot be called an instrument except in a wider sense which does not exclude the free and personal activity of his own mind. If one insists on calling the prophet an "instrument" of God — and St. Thomas in the *Summa* does so very rarely and only in cases where the prophet is an instrument in the proper sense — this general term should be explained according to the particular doctrine of divine and human concurrence, and not vice versa.

Understood within these proper limits, this analogy is useful and fruitful. [3] It illustrates clearly how the same effect can be at once

[1] See especially M. J. Lagrange, O.P., "L'Inspiration des Livres Saints," *Revue Biblique* 5 (1896) 199-220.

[2] This does not mean that this philosophical datum is not authentically integrated into the conception and formulation of the theological doctrine which takes it in and transposes it to its own plain; on this subject, see the remarks of M. Labourdette in *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950) 419.

[3] See Th. M. Pègues, O.P., "Une pensée de St. Thomas sur l'inspiration scripturaire," *Revue Thomiste* 3 (1895) 95-112.

wholly the work of two causes, one subordinated to the other — the principal and the instrumental, — each contributing to its production according to its own proper nature. In the words of St. Thomas, " Non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a Deo et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum; sicut idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus " (*C. Gent.*, III, 70). In the present case, this means that the whole book, form and content, ideas and words, results from the double activity, not juxtaposed but superimposed, of God as the principal cause and of man as the instrumental cause.

We shall speak again of the actual execution of the work and show that the influence of inspiration reaches even the literary expression of the divine message. Then we shall see that the sacred writer, in producing a book whose effects always outstrip him, much more truly deserves the title of instrument in the proper sense (see *infra* p. 118). Suffice it to recall for the present that in the very process of thinking, which is the essential element of the prophetic charism, the one who is inspired is a special type of instrument — an instrument which acts in a vital manner and, though under the divine influence, remains truly the author of its own thought.

2) *The Divine Concurrence in the Thought of the Inspired Author.*

For St. Thomas, God moves man in such a way as not to suppress but to utilize his own natural mode of action. This is true not only when he moves him in the capacity of First Cause setting in motion every secondary cause, but also when he acts upon him by means of a direct influence of the supernatural order, such as sanctifying grace or a charism *(gratia gratis data)*, and even when he gives him a particularly efficacious determining impulse, as is the case in the charism of inspiration. Now it is natural for man to act freely, in an intelligent and voluntary manner. Hence God respects this natural mode of action of his creature and is able to move him by his supreme power without paralyzing him. Undoubtedly, this freedom of man under the all-powerful influence of God is a mystery, but one which must be accepted as a datum and which recurs in all theological problems, whether of nature or of grace.

In the problem which we are at present considering this implies that the sacred writer retains his own intellectual personality even

under the divine influence. The divine light implements and elevates the natural light of his mind, but does not supplant it. Grace does not destroy, but rather perfects nature. The charism of inspiration does not suppress the normal activity of the mind; it elevates and strengthens it. This may be shown briefly with respect to the two operations of the mind, apprehension and judgment.

a) As regards *apprehension*, two cases are possible, says St. Thomas: either God by a supernatural intervention gives his prophet new ideas, or else he lets him use knowledge already acquired by the natural exercise of his mind. In the *first* case, which today we call "revelation," God certainly takes the initiative, but even then he does not do so without the active collaboration of the prophet's mind. Whether the divine light directly infuses the ideas, or causes the mind to derive them from sensible or imaginative visions, the latter does not remain passive, but reacts vitally to abstract, understand, and assimilate this new data (see Explanatory Note 35). In the *second* case, which we call "inspiration," the activity of the mind is still more in evidence. The divine light allows it to work out its ideas or receive its knowledge in the ordinary, natural way. It takes the result of this human inquiry just as it is, without changing its intrinsic nature in any way, and does nothing more than cause the mind to form a judgment on it from a new and supernatural point of view, in accordance with God's purposes. There is no reason to believe, as Franzelin does, that even here God must propose the truth to the mind of the one inspired.[1] On the contrary, the distinctive feature of this case is precisely that the Holy Spirit allows the speaker or writer to work and discover his ideas just like any other man, though with the help of a supernatural light (*cum adjutorio tamen divini luminis*, q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m).

b) Whether the one inspired receives infused ideas from God or uses his own acquired ideas, he must still form his judgments on them with the aid of the divine light. The judgment is the essential act by which intellectual life shows itself. It is with this, says

1 "Si *revelatio* intelligitur sensu minus quidem stricto sed frequentissimo, veritatis propositio ab ipso Deo facta, sane inspiratio quaevis ad scribendos libros sanctos erat revelatio, quae primum quidem fiebat interne in mente hominis inspirati . . ." (Franzelin, *op. cit.*, p. 322). See M. J. Lagrange, *art. cit.*, p. 211 ff.

St. Thomas, that the charism of inspiration is principally concerned. Hence it is chiefly in this area that God respects the autonomy of his instrument, if he does not wish to destroy its role of thinking being. By means of the " lumen propheticum " God illuminates this judgment with a special, supernatural power, differing from the natural concurrence given to every created intellect, and gives it a penetration, a clarity, a certitude which man could not have achieved if left to his own resources. But in so doing, God does not form the judgment in place of his instrument; rather God causes his instrument to judge vitally and humanly, so as to make the divinely impregnated thought of the instrument a source of truth.

Thus it is clear how, in the two stages of apprehension and judgment, God moves the mind of his interpreter from within, and causes him to act in a vital way so that he is truly the author of his own thought. The mind of the prophet, to be sure, receives the divine light only transiently, according to God's good pleasure. Moreover, if there is question of supernatural truths, the prophet will be instructed like a disciple; the conclusions will be given, but not the principles on which they depend. These limitations, as has already been seen, indicate clearly that the prophet is subject to God in a special and truly instrumental way (*supra*, p. 78 ff.). But on the other hand, to the extent that God enlightens him, he receives the divine light in a genuinely vital manner, and reacts by an act of knowledge which is truly his own. Far from paralyzing his own activity in forming concepts and judgments, the divine light elevates and strengthens that activity.

In order to safeguard the human and spontaneous character of the prophet's thought, it is not enough to say that it is exercised freely before the infusion of the prophetic light, as though, once this light were given, the mind became passive and had to receive by " suggestion " or " revelation " from God the thoughts and judgments which it had previously conceived by itself. On the contrary, the spontaneity of his intellectual activity, which existed before he received the charism, lasts and continues to flourish still more under its influence. When strengthened by God's light, the prophet's mind apprehends more clearly, perceives more deeply, and judges more surely than it could have done if left to its own resources. True, it is an instrument, but one which acts fully in accordance with its

nature as a human intellect which apprehends, forms judgments, and reasons. To use an apt expression of Father Pègues, the minds of those who were inspired " were not channels; they were springs, though not primary ones. " [1]

One manifest sign of the delicate, yet all-powerful gentleness with which the divine influence controls its instrument is the fact that the latter is frequently unaware that it is being helped by God. Consider, for example, the Prologues of St. Luke and of the Second Book of Maccabees. Surely nothing shows more clearly how completely the human author remains " himself " in God's hands.

3) *The Bible as the Work of two Authors — A Divine and Human Book.*

It follows from what has just been said that the inspired subject can really be called the author of the thoughts which he conceives under the influence of inspiration, and of the book which contains them. He is, nevertheless, the author only in a secondary, subordinate capacity. Above him there is someone who is Author by virtue of a primary, superior title, that is, God.

Indeed our psychological analysis of the process of inspiration, made with the help of St. Thomas's teaching, fully justifies this title of Author of Holy Scripture which Christian Tradition attributes to God. The truly human freedom which it allows the instrumental cause in no way detracts from the sovereign primacy of the Principal Cause. Whether in the task of conception or in that of judgment, it is really God who is at the origin of everything. It is his light which makes the mind judge supernaturally. In the case of " revelation, " it is this light which infuses images or new ideas into the mind; and, even when he only " inspires, " it is still his light which stimulates the sacred writer in the conception of his book. Later on we shall assert that his sovereign action extends still farther, reaching even the ultimate execution of the book, but in a completely unique way which belongs only to him, by his interior and all-powerful control of a living, intelligent instrument.

The Bible will bear the marks of this double influence which produced it; it will be at once divine and human — not divine with

[1] Pègues, *art. cit.*, p. 108.

respect to the thoughts and human with respect to the words, but divine and human with respect to both. It will be divine in its sublimity, its holiness, its truth, the effectiveness which the action of the Holy Spirit will give to the thoughts and expressions of the human author. It will be human in its limitations, and even in its imperfections, which the divine action will allow to remain in the mind and the language of its instrument.

Even in the "revelation" of supernatural truths, the divine thought will have to clothe itself in human concepts and words, and thereby inevitably suffer certain unavoidable weaknesses. But these will be defects in form and will scarcely affect the excellence of the content. It is especially in cases of simple "inspiration" that the thought which the hagiographer is divinely enlightened to incorporate into the Book will retain the marks of human origin. It may have merely relative value, conditioned by the period and the milieu in which it was born; it will reflect the human mind which conceived it, with its good qualities, but also its defects. Undoubtedly the light of inspiration will be at hand to elevate and purify it, but will not change it essentially, nor will it render it divine to the same extent as a truth which has been revealed in the proper sense of the word. It will leave all those imperfections which do not directly impair the dignity and efficacy of the divine message.

Consequently we realize that the Bible takes on an entirely different aspect according as we see in it only "revelations" from God, or, on the contrary, recognize in it, more often than not, the product of simple "inspiration." In the first case there is danger of looking upon it as a catalog of absolute truths, in which each proposition comes directly from God through the passive, almost negligible channel of the human instrument. In the second case it appears more under the human aspect, which it really has, with the limitations, the lacunae, and even the defects which that implies, not only in the language, but even in the thoughts. [1]

[1] This embodiment of the divine message in human thought with all its imperfections, error excepted, has often been compared to the Incarnation of the divine Word in human flesh, beset with weaknesses, sin excepted. We should, then, avoid what Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 70, has aptly called "biblical Docetism," which would deny the reality of the human self-abasement of the divine thought in Holy Scripture!

Hence the Bible can resemble any other book, as a concrete study of it shows. At the same time it is also, in the true sense of the word, a divine book, different from any other. For it is in truth God who immediately originates the entire thought process of the interpreter whom he inspires. He is quite truly the Author of the Book, of the entire Book, just as man too is its author, each in his own degree: God is the principal Author, and man his faithful instrument.

4) *The Question of Method.*

As we have seen, our method of procedure has been the reverse of Franzelin's. Whereas he begins with the *human notion of author* and, by analyzing this concept, deduces what inspiration must be, we begin with the *theological notion of inspiration* and develop it in such a way as to justify the traditional axiom that God is the Author of Holy Scripture.

There have been many discussions on this question of method. Some have exaggerated its importance; others have minimized its real bearing on the case. The problem, in short, is to explain two closely connected ideas, each of which clarifies the other: the notion of *God the Inspirer of the Sacred Writer* and that of *God the Author of the Sacred Book*. There is no doubt that, in the real order of things, the first of these facts is the cause of the second: it is because God inspired the sacred writer that he can be called the author of the book written by the latter. The very words used in the official decisions of the Church clearly suppose this order. Thus the Vatican Council declares that the books of the Old and New Testament are sacred and canonical " propterea quod *Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti* Deum habent auctorem " (*DB* 1787; *EB* 62 [77]): they are canonical because they have God for their author, and they have God for their author because they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Consult likewise the Council of Florence (*DB* 706; *EB* 32 [47]) and *Providentissimus* (*DB* 1952; *EB* 110 [125]).

But logical sequence is not necessarily the same as ontological sequence. When two notions are linked by a causal relation, it is legitimate to explain the cause by the effect, or the effect by the cause, as the case may be. The two processes are equally legitimate and those who favor the one or the other have equal reason to defend

their point of view. This is what has happened in our problem and has given rise to endless discussions in which one party was right and the other was not wrong.

And yet, while the two methods of procedure are equally legitimate from the point of view of strict logic, they are not equally appropriate or fruitful. The better method will be that which begins with the notion which is more exact and more easily known. And it is precisely this point which has been the basis of the entire dispute.

Franzelin and his followers thought that the notion of author would furnish a clearer, more accessible point of departure; this is where, we think, they were wrong. This notion is a vague one, for there are many ways of being the author of a book. The ancients, for example, had a very different idea of literary authorship than we have; and, above all, it is essentially a human term. The experience of men, reflected in their manner of speaking, is familiar only with books composed by men. For this new, unheard of fact of God himself being responsible for a work, our words are inadequate. The word "author" cannot be used unless it is so broadened that it becomes an analogous term. If it is taken just as it is, in its human and univocal sense, there is danger either of not being able to adapt it to the transcendent case of the divine psychology, or of making a forced adaptation which lowers God to the level of human psychology. Franzelin has, in fact, opted for the latter, which is precisely what we wish to avoid. [1]

How are we to form an analogical idea of author? A material analysis of the sacred book would not suffice for our purposes: it is a well-known fact that it resembles any other human book (unless one wishes to have recourse to the internal criteria of the Protestants). Only the formal study of its composition can enlighten us on God's role in it. It is because God inspired the Bible that he can be called its author; and he is the author in the degree and manner in which he inspired it.

Hence we are led to study the notion of inspiration in itself. It is an exact notion, and above all a theological one, by definition adapted and restricted to the unique case of God. It may seem less clear and less familiar than that of author; this is precisely why it

[1] See M. J. Lagrange, in *Revue Biblique*, New Series 2 (1905) 621.

is more reliable. There is no danger of beginning with an equivocation and thus starting off on the wrong track. Moreover it is not as obscure as some make it out to be. It brings into play tried and familiar theological theses, such as those of grace and the charisms, of the divine and human concurrence, and of instrumental causality — admittedly a mysterious concept. But the notion of God as Author of Holy Scripture, if it is understood accurately, without anthropomorphism, is no less mysterious; it is even more so.

We will therefore begin by developing this theological datum of God influencing a human writer by means of his charism of inspiration. And at the end of this analysis, if it has been well carried through, we should be able to say that God is truly the Author of the inspired book, and to understand in what sense. This will be a broadened, analogical sense, rich in theological implications, one which will not confine God within the narrow limits of human authorship, but will respect his transcendence as divine Author. It is certain that, among men, the author of a book must at least have conceived the ideas; this seems to be a minimum requirement, and it is this minimum that Franzelin demands. But there is another possibility of which human psychology offers no instance, that of one mind causing another to think by communicating an interior light to it: it is this which the doctrine of inspiration teaches us to be the case with God, and which transforms the ordinary meaning of the word " author. "

To be sure this is more than just a question of method which might appear inconsequential or antiquated — and has actually seemed so to some writers; [1] it is a very important question of attitude. Two mentalities are at work, two ways of looking at Holy Scripture, depending on the point of departure each one takes in his study of the question. Franzelin begins with a human notion — what an " author " must be — and ends up with God, to whom he makes a forced application of that notion. We prefer to begin with a theological notion, the divine action of inspiration, and end up with man, the recipient of this action. The two procedures are contrary, and their results are opposite. The first of these procedures projects the sacred book into the mind of the divine author in a univocal

[1] See A. Bea, *op. cit.*, p. 24, no. 22.

fashion; this confers upon it an absolute quality which is hardly in agreement with the concrete reality of Holy Scripture, and which reduces the human writer to being author only of the words. The second procedure puts the book back into the human mind from which God draws it forth by a process as powerful as it is gentle, one which, though making the product divine and perfect in its teaching, in other respects leaves untouched its defects as a human book. The result is that God and man simultaneously merit the name of author, but each by a different title and in an eminently analogous fashion which can be detected in the book itself, at once divine and human, perfect and imperfect.

E) The Speculative and Practical Judgments — Prophetic and Scriptural Inspiration.

Up to this point we have spoken of the judgment in general terms; we must now be more specific. Inspiration is a charism of the social order. The persons inspired do not think in a vacuum; they have a message to communicate to other men. Now the task of speaking or writing for another's benefit is quite different from an act of pure knowledge. We might clarify this difference by contrasting the speculative judgment with the practical judgment. We shall do so first of all from the viewpoint of psychology in general, and then by way of application to the case of inspiration.

1) *The Speculative and Practical Judgments.*

The speculative judgment has for its object *the true*. It is the culmination of an investigation: the mind has inquired, reflected, debated, and finally gives its assent to what it sees to be the truth. The practical judgment has for its object *the good*. It comes into play at the outset of a work: a man sets for himself a practical goal, and, after deliberation, decides which means seem best suited to attain this goal. In the case of a speaker or writer the practical judgment works in close harmony with the speculative in order to achieve the best possible presentation of the thoughts which the author has conceived and wishes to communicate.

Nevertheless, the relations between these judgments can take on many varied forms. Sometimes the speculative judgment comes first, while the practical judgment follows: a truth is first contemplated

in itself, in a disinterested way, and then, only afterwards comes the idea that it would be good to make it known to others. At other times, the practical judgment comes first and stimulates the speculative judgment: a man wishes to produce a certain effect on the public and decides, for that purpose, to compose a speech or a book; after selecting the most suitable literary type, he then begins to reflect on the ideas which will be developed in it.

This latter case, however, involves more than a mere question of temporal priority. The crucial point here is the predominant influence of one type of judgment on the other; this is a matter which will greatly affect the resulting literary work. For the practical judgment of a speaker or writer is often wider in scope than his speculative judgment; it can serve other ends. The latter is restricted to truth for its own sake; when it predominates in the thinker's mind, the practical judgment is confined to the very secondary role of presenting this truth under the clearest, most objective literary form possible. The practical judgment, on the other hand, has a particular good in view; it is no longer an act of pure understanding; it channels and expresses an attraction of the will. And it can happen that the practical judgment in its turn predominates. In the case of an orator or a writer this means that it will require his voice or his pen to produce that particular effect on his listeners or readers which he judges to be good, and which is not necessarily an increase in their knowledge. He will, of course, to a great extent, want to enlighten and instruct them; but he can also appeal to their affective side, working on their feelings and emotions. There are many objects which an author can have in view — to console, threaten, charm, relax, amuse, entertain, etc. — all of which are quite distinct from the search for pure truth; they may even hinder or supplant it. Finally, his purpose may be simply to hand on to posterity the memory of some customs or beliefs which he wants to save from oblivion, without, however, proposing them as models for imitation or as truths for belief.

It is easy to see that, according as these different objectives enter in, the practical judgment can at times have a great influence on the speculative judgment. It makes use of the speculative judgment as one element in the psychological complex which it wishes to deposit in the book, but not the only one, since the presentation of truth is

not its only purpose. It limits the formal object of the speculative judgment or regulates its degree of affirmation and of presentation according to its assigned function in the plan of the work. The author does not disregard truth or do violence to it simply because he regulates its use in this fashion. He is free to give the intellect the role he wishes it to play in his book, and he does well to plan carefully how he is to present the truth, so that he can thereby render it more pleasant, more palatable, and hence more useful.

Not only does the practical judgment direct and moderate the expression of the speculative judgment; it can even do without it. This will be the case when the author says certain things merely for the sake of elegance, amusement, or relaxation, without attributing to these statements any importance in the intellectual or doctrinal order and without making any appraisal of their intrinsic truth. This will also be the case when he cites the remarks of another author without having himself thought them through or made them his own, but simply because he thinks it opportune to make them known.

It would be possible indefinitely to multiply the many subtle variations according to which the viewpoint of expediency — that of the practical judgment — can be related to the viewpoint of objective truth — which belongs to the speculative judgment. It is enough to have called attention to the principle which governs these mutual relations. Now we wish to see its consequences in the question of inspiration.

2) *The Prophet and the Sacred Writer.*

Can we apply these elementary rules of human psychology to those who are inspired? Yes, certainly, since we have recognized that inspiration is a grace which moves the human mind while respecting its own proper mode of action. By elevating and totally penetrating the mind's activity, the divine impulse undoubtedly directs it toward ends especially willed by God and differing from the ends of ordinary men. It will be particularly orientated toward the instruction of minds and education of hearts in view of the service of God. This is precisely what, generally speaking, distinguishes our sacred books from profane books. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the inspired authors can do nothing but propose doctrines

or proclaim laws. Such a consequence of inspiration would be unfounded in theory and is contradicted by actual facts.

It is enough to open the Bible to realize that the sacred writers, under the divine impulse, spoke with all the varying shades of meaning which men employ in their daily speech and that they had in view other objects besides doctrinal instruction. [1] At times they also threaten or console, encourage or call to penance, delight or entertain. And, when they wish to instruct, we see them using all the resources of human psychology to convey to simple minds sublime thoughts by making them attractive and easy to grasp. Finally, we note more than once that even they are anxious to transmit to posterity the recollection of ways of acting or of thinking which they thought it useful to preserve, without intending to inculcate them or to teach them. [2]

In other words, then, even in their case the practical judgment intervenes and acts more or less, as the case may be, upon the speculative judgment. As a result, the practical judgment too receives its share of inspiration, and it does so in a higher or lower degree according to its relative importance in the actual thought processes of the inspired subject.

To which of the two judgments will the first, principal impulse of inspiration be directed? This depends on God's intention, that is to say, on the mission he is entrusting to the one inspired. In this regard we might distinguish two distinct vocations, as it were: the first one impels one to *repeat an oracle* which has come down from heaven; the other impels one to *compose a book*. We shall designate them by the two standard terms, "*prophet*" and "*sacred writer*," [3] Inspiration will take on different forms in each case.

[1] On this question, 2 Tim 3:16-17 is very significant: "All [Holy] Scripture is divinely inspired, and useful in teaching, in reproof, in correcting faults, and in training in uprightness, so that the man of God will be adequate, and equipped for any good work." These are diverse practical ends, and teaching is but one among them.

[2] See F. J. Schroeder, "Père Lagrange: Record and Teaching in Inspiration," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958) 206-17.

[3] The latter might be called "hagiographer," taking this term in its etymological meaning. But in current usage the term has taken on a more technical meaning which could easily lead to confusion. For biblical scholars,

a) For the *prophet*, who receives from God a message to deliver, the speculative judgment occupies the foreground and directly receives the illumination. For knowledge is here the prime consideration. God wishes to reveal to his representative — and ultimately to other men — truths which will inform them of his mind and his will. Hence the essential feature of the divine gift is a light which illuminates the intellect and causes it to know and contemplate these truths in a judgment that possesses divine clarity and certitude.

On the other hand, the practical judgment has, in this case, only a very minor and secondary role. The inspiration affects it only indirectly and gives it very little to do. To be sure, the prophet must give external expression to the truth which he has perceived, but this task scarcely allows for any reflection. He does not have to wonder whether it is advisable for him to speak, or what he should say. God has revealed his message to him and is ordering him to transmit it with the greatest possible care and accuracy. At the very most he has to make a choice about the method of presentation, the form of his discourse. Even here there is a limit; the more his thought has been illuminated by the divine light, the more forcibly do the very words suggest themselves to him, for he could not have thought without verbal images.

b) The case of the *sacred writer* is quite different. He receives from God an impulse to compose a book, and this book, as was said above, is not a mere transcription of revealed teachings, but has in view other ends besides instruction; it must make use of all the resources of human psychology to move the minds and hearts of men. This is a concrete, complex objective which calls for much more initiative on the part of the writer's practical reason than the mere promulgation of an apprehended truth. This time the action of inspiration will first affect his practical reason and will have for its primary object the practical judgment whereby the writer will decide how to accomplish his assigned task.

the "Hagiographa" constitute one of the three great divisions of Scripture, in addition to the Law and the Prophets. The "sacred writer" of whom we are here speaking means any author or editor of an inspired writing, including the Pentateuch as well as the Hagiographa, and the Prophetic writings as well as the New Testament.

This inspiration of the sacred writer will, of course, necessarily involve also an illumination of the speculative judgment, but only as a consequence and to the degree that the latter actually comes into play. Moreover, as we have seen, in this case the speculative judgment no longer has the dominant role. Just as the practical judgment of the writer, as has been shown, directs and moderates the use of his speculative judgment according to the needs of his book, so the action of inspiration, conforming itself to the psychological activity of the author, of which it is also the supreme cause, illuminates his knowledge only to the extent to which he will make use of it in his work, which may be very much or very little.

It may be that the sacred writer categorically affirms a doctrinal truth which he has thought out by himself. In that event, his inspiration will include as complete an illumination of his knowledge as in the case of the prophet. It may happen, on the other hand, that he makes no affirmations, that he speaks or cites other authors' accounts without vouching for them as his own thought. In that case inspiration will affect only his practical judgment. Or finally — and this is the most frequent case — it may happen that he expresses a judgment of truth, but one which is conditioned in its formal object and in its degree of affirmation by the general demands of the end he has in view; in this case the light of inspiration will illuminate this judgment, not as an absolute, but to the exact extent to which the author conceives and expresses it.

Here again, one might mention an endless variety of combinations in the psychological processes actually to be found in concrete cases; hence also an endless number of variations in the charism of inspiration which directs these processes. It can happen, for instance, that a prophet is raised up, not simply to repeat a message received from God, but to exhort, threaten, console, etc., by the use of his own mental resources, stimulated by a practical impulse from the Holy Spirit. Or one might find, on the other hand, a sacred writer who has been favored by God with genuine revelations, and whose scriptural activity consists merely in transcribing them as faithfully as possible. This is not too important. In contrasting the two typical cases of "prophet" and "sacred writer" we have sought only to indicate the two fundamental relationships which can obtain between the speculative and practical judgments, according as the one or the

other dominates. And we have attributed these combinations to the two types of inspired subjects because that is what actually occurs, as in so many other instances, in the providence of God. The roles of the speculative and practical judgment can, as a matter of fact, be differently apportioned, but the possibility of such exceptions in no way affects the truth of the principle which we have stated, for that principle is psychologically and theoretically sound.

3) *Revelation, Cognitive Inspiration, and Scriptural Inspiration.*

Hence we see that the task of the prophet and that of the sacred writer — and consequently the charism each receives — are clearly distinct. Nor can this difference be reduced to a mere question of the material execution of the work (of speaking or writing), as a superficial view of the matter might lead us to believe. The essential differentiating factor in these two typical cases, the one which explains the many varying degrees of importance which must be attached to the practical judgment in one instance or the other, is the nature of the message which God confides to his representative. In the case of the prophet, God reveals to him supernatural truths which he could never have attained by himself and which he therefore has only to repeat. The sacred writer, on the other hand, retains the task of acquiring and ordering by himself — with God's help, to be sure — natural truths, or even supernatural ones, which he has been able to learn by human methods of inquiry.

In other words, once again we meet the familiar distinction between revelation and inspiration (in the modern sense of these terms). But its meaning is now much deeper and it implies more than just the presence or absence of infused "species" in addition to the "lumen" which causes one to form a judgment. This time the very nature of the inspired judgment enters into the question. For, besides the distinction based on the material cause, now there is also the matter of finality.

In the prophet's revelation, the judgment is essentially speculative, because God's purpose in giving the charism is the teaching of truth. In the sacred writer's inspiration, on the other hand, the judgment is first of all practical, and only secondarily and to a limited extent speculative; for in this case God indicates to the one whom he inspires

more extensive and more varied ends, among which the teaching of truth is only one of many. In prophecy, the divine charism first affects the intellect; in literary inspiration, God acts initially on the will. The intellect of the sacred writer is later influenced only to the extent required by the divine plan, which, as we have seen, may be very great or very slight.

We might clarify these distinctions and try to establish a set terminology — something which is often, unfortunately, too vague in this field [1] — by recognizing three possible formalities in the divine charism:

a) *Revelation:* a gift of supernatural knowledge to the mind by way of *infused species;*

b) *Cognitive Inspiration:* a light which illuminates the *speculative judgment* and raises it to a supernatural mode of knowledge;

c) *Scriptural Inspiration:* a supernatural impulse which stimulates the will and directs the *practical judgment* with a view to the composition of a book which is to produce a certain effect. [2]

[1] Ed. Hugon, O.P. (*La causalité instrumentale en théologie* [Paris, 1907], p. 48) calls the three formalities distinguished here: *revelation, illumination,* and *inspiration.* However, we think it better not to restrict this last term to the affective order, but to use it also with regard to knowledge in accordance with its primary meaning, which is the only one used by St. Thomas. In the first edition I spoke of prophetic revelation, prophetic inspiration, and scriptural inspiration. This division could and did lead to misunderstanding. In spite of my context, I was interpreted as denying to the prophet any impulse that might extend to writing, and to the sacred writer any illumination of his knowledge or revelation of supernatural truths. Besides, this division was not perfectly homogeneous: " prophetic " connotes a class of inspired persons, while " scriptural " indicates a human activity. Now I prefer to restrict the term prophetic inspiration to a classification of persons under the formality of their ecclesiastical missions; thus it will be distinguished from " dramatic " and " hagiographical " inspiration (see *infra,* p. 126 f.). On the plane of human activities, I prefer to speak here of inspiration to think (" cognitive ") and inspiration to write (" scriptural"). See *Sacra Pagina* I, 86-99.

[2] As far as concerns our present viewpoint, the composition of a " discourse " can be likened to that of a " book "; the same practical finality distinguishes them from properly speculative knowledge. The one can be called " oratorical " inspiration, the other, " scriptural. "

Most of the time, in fact, these formalities, which we have above outlined in the abstract, are in the concrete found united, although in varying proportions. The first is characteristic of the prophet, while the third belongs most properly to the sacred writer. The second can be found in either: in the prophet, when he himself judges the meaning of the visions he has been granted (this is the normal case with the genuine prophet); in the sacred writer, when his inspired practical judgment causes him to form speculative judgments. Finally it can happen — though this is more rarely the case — that a prophet also receives scriptural inspiration, in addition to his mission as prophet, or that a sacred writer is favored with genuine supernatural revelations for the sake of his book. [1]

These distinctions will enable us to diagnose the two errors, by excess and by defect, which have been made in this field. In so doing we shall confirm the soundness of the distinctions themselves.

4) *The Error by Excess.*

The error by excess consists in considering as the object of inspiration only the speculative judgment concerning truth, and in failing to recognize the frequently preponderant importance of the practical judgment. This is the conclusion to which Franzelin's reasoning leads, and it is inevitable once the ideas of the book are looked upon as being in the mind of God who dictates and suggests all of them. Whenever inspiration is thus conceived after the fashion

[1] The different possible combinations of these charisms may be schematically presented ad follows:

a alone: Pharaoh or Belshazzar receiving a revelation which he does not understand;

b alone: a prophet or apostle making use of a divine light to judge about what he has come to know without revelation;

c alone: a sacred writer quoting on the authority of another or writing about incidentals, without vouching for the truth of the matter;

a and b: a genuine prophet making a judgment concerning his supernatural knowledge;

a and c: an author who would write down, at God's bidding, revelations which he has received but does not understand;

b and c: a sacred writer making a speculative judgment concerning the things about which he is writing;

a, b and c: a prophet (or sacred writer) committing to writing revelations which he has received and understood.

of a revelation, the mind of the human author is despoiled of that initiative which we have described in terms of the influence of the practical judgment on the speculative. All that is left is a very limited initiative in what concerns the choice of words, but which has nothing to do with the ideas. This, in short, would be the case described above as the typical case of the prophet. In Franzelin's system the prophet alone figures, and the sacred writer loses his identity to him. In other words, using the terminology proposed above, cognitive inspiration is confused with prophetic revelation; and scriptural inspiration as such is reduced to nothing but an assistance which guarantees the executive faculties against error.

The awkward consequence of such a theory is that the thoughts of the human author, which are immediately those of God, all take on an equal, absolute value. One fails to recognize the sometimes considerable relativity which is introduced into the act of knowledge by the pursuit of practical objectives other than instruction.

Occasionally the authority of St. Thomas has been cited in order to justify this misapprehension. Some believed that his treatise on prophecy could be applied immediately to scriptural inspiration. Does he not speak of a *motio ad loquendum* which normally follows the illumination of the intellect (q. 171, a. 1; cf. q. 173, a. 4; q. 174, a. 3 and 4)? And is not the difference between speaking and writing a purely material one? If so one may, with no difficulty at all, apply to the latter what has been said of the former.

But we have shown that what distinguishes the sacred writer from the prophet is not at all the mere detail of whether the material execution of the work be oral or written. The decisive factor here is the judgment, and the character of the judgment differs profoundly according to the extent that the speculative or practical formality predominates in each instance. Now it has to be admitted that St. Thomas treated formally only the gift of prophecy; he considered it a charism of knowledge and he took his stand especially from the point of view of the speculative judgment (see *supra*, p. 61 f.). Even when he speaks of the hagiographers — and he does so only in passing, as of a borderline case—he is still exclusively interested in their knowledge, maintaining that, even when it bears on natural objects, it judges such objects " secundum certitudinem veritatis divinae "

(q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m; cf. q. 173, a. 2 c). This is still a question of the speculative judgment. [1]

On the other hand, he scarcely considers the role of the practical judgment. In connection with the "gift of words" (q. 177, a. 1), he clearly sets forth the concrete goals which the sacred orator is to keep in view: not only to "instruct," but also to "please" and to "move"; and this remark is even more applicable to the sacred writer. But he does not inquire further into how such goals affect the thought processes of the inspired subject and the supernatural action directing them. [2] He does not do so because the case of the prophet" — which is his only concern — is entirely different in this matter from that of the "sacred writer," and does not call for the same remarks. In short, while treating of the "gift of words," St. Thomas has given us a sketch of "oratorical inspiration," something already distinct from cognitive inspiration, but not yet scriptural inspiration.

The fact remains that in one illuminating phrase he does give us a hint of how the thought processes of the prophet differ fundamentally from those of the hagiographer. When he says that the former speaks "ex persona Domini," while the latter speaks "ex persona propria" (q. 174, a. 2, ad 3m), is he not clearly suggesting that difference in the messenger's initiative which we explained in terms of the greater or less importance of the practical judgment? This indication is very meaningful. St. Thomas would undoubtedly have developed it further had he studied *scriptural* inspiration in itself. He did not do so, because the state of biblical studies in his time, unlike our own, did not demand it. We must be mindful of this when we wish to apply what he says of prophecy to scriptural

[1] What has been said above concerning St. Thomas's terminology (p. 68 ff.) is more easily understood in the light of these reflections. He almost always speaks of "revelation," even with reference to the hagiographer, because he always has in mind the case of the typical prophet, and is not considering the hagiographer except in relation to the prophet, and thus on the plane of knowledge. On the other hand, the term "inspiration," which of itself designates a practical impulse not necessarily restricted to the intellectual order, is for the same reason used but rarely in this treatise.

[2] This explains how Franzelin could use what St. Thomas says about the *gratia sermonis*, while limiting its influence to the *ratio materialis* of the book, i.e., its literary form (*op. cit.*, p. 324).

inspiration. We may regret his silence; we should not take advantage of it to misrepresent his thought.

5) *The Error by Defect.*

If it is an excess to think that the inspiration of the sacred writer affects the speculative judgment first and always, it would be no less so to think that it never affects it and to restrict inspiration exclusively to the practical judgment. And yet this opinion has been held and deserves to be considered in its turn.

According to some,[1] inspiration is absolutely nothing more than an "orientation" imparted to the practical reason, or even an impulse given first to the will, with no resulting "illumination" of the speculative intellect whatsoever. To be sure, cognitive activity is required for the composition of the book, but it has no share in the charism of inspiration. Supernatural knowledge, they would hold, implies a "revelation" in which the mind is passive and receives the truths which God reveals to it. Natural knowledge, on the other hand, is acquired by the ordinary operations of the human faculties left to themselves, as happens with every other writer. In either case, the activity involved is of another order, that of pure knowledge, with which inspiration properly so called is not directly concerned. The latter, let us repeat, is of the strictly executive order. Its function is not to impart knowledge of the truth. It presupposes that such knowledge has been acquired and is concerned with its transmission.

This opinion is the result of a reaction against Franzelin; the reaction is understandable, but it goes too far. Under pretext of distinguishing between the notion of revelation and inspiration, which had been unduly confused with each other, this theory disassociates them excessively, to the great detriment of the speculative element. The latter now has for its sole divine guarantee only the charism of "revelation," which is not always involved. When the objects to be known are in the natural order, the mind is left to its

[1] See e.g., E. Levesque, in *Revue Biblique* 4 (1895) 421 ff.; his "Essai sur la nature de l'inspiration des Livres Saints," *Revue des Facultés catholiques de l'Ouest*, (1886), pp. 4-7 of the offprint; and his remarks in *Revue Biblique* 6 (1897) 325 ff.

Fr. Lagrange, in *Revue Biblique* 5 (1896) 499, made some explicit reservations regarding the opinion of Levesque. See also Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 57 ff.

own resources to form its speculative judgment of truth concerning them. But the speculative judgment is the essential element in knowledge, its formal constituent, the basis of its truth and its authority. Can it, then, be removed from the sphere of divine influence without destroying the truth and the authority of the sacred book?

The defenders of this opinion will no doubt say that, as they understand the term, inspiration still retains a certain influence on the speculative judgment. It does not illuminate it directly, but it controls it in an indirect manner. True, it immediately affects only the will and the practical reason, but through these faculties it exercises a mediate action, if not on the speculative judgment in itself, at least upon its expression in the book.

This consideration is not enough. The most it attributes to inspiration is a certain negative control of the speculative judgment, preventing it from being erroneous; it does not acknowledge its role of positive illumination which is necessary for this judgment to assume a divine authority. Moreover, this is what is required in order that the sacred book really have God for its author: each speculative judgment which is formally affirmed, and insofar as it is affirmed, must be directly attributable to God; consequently, it must have been expressed by the human author who is his instrument, under the immediate action of God illuminating his mind. And this must be true even for judgments which bear only on natural objects; for there are such judgments, which the author affirms and which are therefore part of the divine teaching.

For the writer's judgments to have this divine authority it is not required that God deposit them ready-made in the author's passive mind. We have already explained, with the help of St. Thomas, how the human mind can operate, think, and work in a completely normal manner and still be moved at the same time by divine inspiration, thereby producing a judgment which is truly authorized by God. This is what the adherents of the opinion now under discussion have failed to understand. Basically they wished to avoid the consequences of the Franzelin solution, but were unable to break away from his principles. They wished to discard the theory of intellectual dictation of the entire book, but, instead of directing their criticism at the principles on which this theory of dictation was based, they simply restricted dictation to the " revealed " elements

of the book. Instead of rejecting the notion of a purely passive mind which simply receives what God imparts to it, they merely limited this case to supernatural truths. After making what they considered a necessary minimal concession, they compensated for it in their treatment of what remained, that is, the naturally knowable truths. Rejecting the " suggestion " which Franzelin here used to maintain the hegemony of the dictation theory, they freed the writer's mind from all divine control over its knowledge in this area, and consigned inspiration in this matter to the role of practical and voluntary execution. Whence this alternative, either of whose terms is equally awkward: in the case of supernatural truths, which the mind receives by revelation, it is a purely passive instrumental cause, expressing a judgment which is entirely divine; in the opposite case, when the human mind receives only inspiration, it is the principal cause of its own knowledge and it expresses an entirely human judgment.

All this results from failing to understand that God can illuminate knowledge otherwise than by revelation or dictation, namely, by that " cognitive inspiration " which we, following the lead of St. Thomas, have discussed, and which harmoniously reconciles the action of God and man. To the two alternatives mentioned above, we add a third possibility: the entirely unique case in which the mind of a man, at once directed and autonomous, passive and active, is an instrumental cause which acts at the same time as it is moved, thus forming a judgment which is both divine and human. This illumination of the speculative judgment *(motio ad cogitandum)*, that is to say — to use the terminology proposed above — this " cognitive inspiration, " furnishes us with an element which was missing in the opinion under discussion, the link between " revelation " and " scriptural inspiration " *(motio ad scribendum)*.

6) We think, then, that the correct solution is a happy medium between the two opinions just examined. In agreement with the second against the first, we admit that inspiration is distinct from revelation, and, in the case of the sacred writer, is first of all an impulse in the practical order. In some cases, indeed, it can be only that and may not involve any judgment, and therefore any charism, of the speculative order.

But, in agreement with the first opinion against the second, we maintain that every speculative judgment of the writer must be

produced under the positive enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and, consequently, that " scriptural inspiration " necessarily implies " cognitive inspiration " whenever the sacred writer forms a judgment of truth and to the extent that he affirms it.

Finally, whereas these two opinions artificially separate or isolate the two orders of the speculative and the practical, in our theory they overlap. Now the consequences of this are of supreme importance: scriptural inspiration penetrates and specifies the writer's cognitive inspiration; his practical judgment commands and moderates his speculative judgment. The result is an inspired thought which exhibits all the nuances, restrictions, and limitations characteristic of human thinking, and which is nonetheless God's thought, precisely as he wishes to make it known to the children of men.

Moreover we find this practical finality of inspiration, even in the intellectual order, clearly affirmed in the official pronouncements of *Providentissimus* and *Spiritus Paraclitus* (cf. *supra*, p. 90, notes 1 and 2). The words " ut recte mente conciperent " of the former cannot be restricted to a pure act of speculative knowledge except by taking them out of context. The sentence in which they are contained, taken in its entirety, clearly indicates the practical, concrete end in view of which inspiration sets in motion all the author's powers, including his intellect: it provokes and moves him to write; it assists him in his work, with the result that he forms a correct idea in his mind of everything that God is ordering him to write and nothing more, etc. To put it most aptly, scriptural inspiration does not induce speculation in a void, but causes the matter of the book to be conceived *in the way in which God judges fitting that it should be presented.* The Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* likewise makes an immediate connection between the light of inspiration and the *presentation* of the truth, thus restating in another way that the formal object of the illumination granted to the writer's mind — that is, the object which specifies and limits that illumination — is the truth such as God wishes to make it known and to the extent that he wishes to make it known. But, even though this light orientates the writer's work toward a practical end, it still remains fully and especially a " light " which illuminates his mind as much as is necessary. For God can teach nothing which is not rightly conceived and true.

7) *The Sacred Writer as an Instrument in the Strict Sense.* [1]

I remarked above (pp. 77-83, 94-95) that the prophet cannot be called instrumental cause of his knowledge except in a broad and improper sense. This was true of the prophetic charism; but if we consider scriptural inspiration, as we have just done, the case is different. For the end product of this inspiration is no longer an immanent act of knowledge necessarily proportioned to the mind producing it; it is rather an external effect which goes beyond the conscious intent of its author and frees itself from him to take its place in a vaster complex. This effect is the objective book for which God, in having it composed, has destined a role in the history of Revelation which the human author could never suspect. Not only has he prepared it for a reading public far beyond the author's contemporaries to whom it was addressed, but he has given it a place in a great literary collection, the Bible of the Old and New Testament; here this particular book receives new dimensions, being explained by the other books in the collection and in turn explaining them, in order to join with them in the total teaching of the full Revelation. We realize how much an individual author, no matter how strong the illumination given him, is outstripped by the providential finality of the Sacred Book. Beyond what he has consciously included in his text, the text itself will always contain seeds of further development, refrains and resonances which are beyond his power of clear perception; but they have been put into the text with his concurrence, if not his knowledge, by the Sovereign Author of the whole Book. This is the whole richness of the secondary senses which are a continuation of the primary sense known by the author (see pp. 149 f.). For this whole residue of which he is not conscious, he is clearly an instrument in the strict sense of the word. This is, moreover, nothing more than an application of the theological principle previously discovered in St. Thomas himself. The difference is in the extent of application. While from the formal viewpoint of prophetic knowledge the surplus of truth which escaped the judgment could be considered a secondary and relatively rare case, from the viewpoint of scriptural inspiration, however, this surplus becomes the rule.

[1] By making this addition to the first edition, I wish to do justice to the observations of M. Labourdette in *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950) 418

In order that the Sacred Book be filled with a richness of meaning that fits it for the total Revelation in which it holds a place, it is obviously necessary that God preside over its literary production in a very different way than by the simple " assistance " of Cardinal Franzelin, *sc.*, it must be directed by a quite immediate and efficacious impulse directed toward the executive faculties of the human author. We shall see this when we discuss the extension of inspiration to all the faculties of the sacred author. Furthermore, we shall have to abandon the somewhat theoretical consideration of an author viewed as an isolated individual; we shall have to see how inspiration must take in many minds and many hearts through many centuries in order to have them collaborate, even without their knowledge, according to a concerted plan to produce the great literary collection which is the Bible, both one and diverse, multiple and harmonious.

3. THE EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

A) Inspiration Extends to all the Faculties of the Sacred Writer.

The practical judgment presupposes, as we have said, an attraction in the will which provides the judgment with a definite end. Once it has fixed its choice, the practical judgment, in turn, needs an act of the will for the execution of the decision which it has made. Under an impulse of the will, directed by the practical judgment, the executive faculties then come into play: imagination, memory, feelings, the physical activities of speaking or writing. These all contribute to the final result of expression in oral or written form, according as the author has decided to express his thought in a speech or in a book.

This entire process of the executive faculties must also be under the influence of inspiration, if we wish the result to be truly the work of God. For the words of the prophet to be divine oracles, for the work of the hagiographer to be a " divine writing, " it is necessary for the orator or writer to have been assisted by the supernatural charism during the entire course of his work, and not only in the conception of the ideas. Otherwise, there will be no guarantee that the truths inspired by God have not been misrepresented by an

expression which was purely human. [1] Moreover, this influence upon the will and the executive faculties is mentioned explicitly in the pronouncements concerning inspiration in *Providentissimus* and *Spiritus Paraclitus* (cf. *supra*, p. 90, notes 1 and 2).

But how must we conceive this influence of inspiration on the execution of the work? If we take the general teaching of St. Thomas as our guide, there will be no difficulty in admitting that the influence of inspiration moves and directs the will and the executive faculties in a manner quite as positive, peremptory, and flexible as it moves the intellect. Here too, as in the case of the intellect, the inspired subject will be considered as an instrument in the hands of God, the principal cause; but under the divine influence this instrument will continue to act by its own connatural power, and it will remain no less free and personal in its deliberation, its determination, and its literary execution than it was in its thought processes. One concession will be made — the charism of inspiration varies its action in accordance with the different faculties, and adapts it analogously to the proper mode of activity of each faculty.

1) *Influence on the Will.*

First of all, inspiration makes the sacred writer will what God wills, and yet in a human way, that is, as a free and responsible person. The writer's will receives a supernatural impulse which takes the form of an immediate physical motion. This is necessary if God is truly to retain the whole efficacious initiative of a book which will be his work. A merely moral stimulus would not suffice, though God may at the same time act in this fashion; as we know, God sometimes

[1] This is what distinguishes the depositaries of official revelation, first Jewish and then Christian, from private mystics. The latter may have received revelations no less authentic and sublime — even more sublime — than the former; but they did not have the charism to express them inerrantly. When it is said that " Revelation " closed with the last Apostle, it is understood that whatever further revelations God may have granted, or may still grant, do not have the same essentially social character as regards doctrine and are not authoritative for faith (see Explanatory Note 56). The saints can mingle with the accounts of their visions formal errors coming from their own minds. From this the inspired writers of the Old and New Testaments were preserved. See Levesque in *Revue Biblique* 4 (1895) 421 ff.

uses external occasions to stimulate his writer, for example, the requests made to the evangelist St. Mark by the Christians at Rome.

This action on the will should be conceived as closely paralleling the influence on the intellect, since, in any case, these two faculties cannot be divorced from one another in the concrete. In his will, as in his intellect, the inspired writer finds himself much more intimately dependent on the divine Cause than he is when he receives only the ordinary divine concurrence. Thus he becomes a perfectly docile instrument. He does not wish to deliver his message in the same way as he might wish to perform some natural action or even acts of supernatural virtue, that is, he does not act when he pleases and of his own accord. He is moved to work by the stimulus of transient but peremptory impulses, which come upon him now and then in the same way that the prophetic light illuminates his intellect; but these impulses then ineluctably determine him to will the work that God wills and they sustain him during the entire time that he is working.

And yet, just as the intellect retains its vital activity and the spontaneity of its judgment under the brilliance of the divine light, so too the will begins to act and deploys its energy under the divine impulse without any violation of its own proper mode of action; in other words, it acts rationally and freely. In the order of volition as in that of knowledge, the inspired writer is a special type of instrument, one which is alive and human.

In the last analysis, how are we to understand this peremptory action which determines the will without suppressing its liberty? This question belongs to a much larger problem in theology, that of the efficacy of grace. Each school solves this problem according to its own system, and this is not the place to go into that dispute. Suffice it to say that Thomist theologians will have recourse to the doctrine of physical predetermination.

2) *Influence on the Executive Faculties.*

Let us now consider the activation of the executive faculties, which particularly determines the choice of expression and the literary composition. It is not necessary, in order to safeguard the individual qualities of the human author which are so strikingly evident in this part of his work, that the divine intervention be reduced to a mere

negative assistance, as Franzelin proposed.[1] He can remain an instrument in the sense we have mentioned and still retain that liberty of action which is reflected in the finished product. While remaining constantly subject to the direct and positive action of God's inspiration, he is just as free in his literary effort as any other writer. The divine impulse which directs him from on high merely gives him greater security in choosing his modes of expression.[2] He does not necessarily find his task easier, any more than he is necessarily conscious of the help which is being given him. But, whether he knows it or not, the hand which guides him insures him against falsifying the truth of his message. Even more than that — for here we are dealing with a positive influence — he selects, under the gentle impulse which guides him, the expressions, the turns of phrase, the literary types which will best serve the end which God has in view for his work. This is what we call " verbal inspiration. "

Some have felt alarmed at verbal inspiration, seeing in it a return to the old theory of the " dictation " of Holy Scripture. The reason is that they do not understand this liberty of action which we claim for the human instrument working under the divine influence, and because they still confuse inspiration with revelation.

Others have thought the expression unfortunate and have preferred to speak of " total inspiration. "[3] This is hardly more than a quarrel about words. The latter formula does have the advantage of laying greater stress on the continuity of inspiration. It is actually one and the same charism which affects all the writer's faculties. This charism is, of course, diversified according as it affects the intellect, the will, or the executive faculties. But it is the very same impulse which moves all of them together and which, in particular, brings about the discovery of the words while causing the conception of the ideas. Indeed, is any other explanation possible? We have criticized Franzelin for having introduced an impossible separation here between the ideas and their literary expression. It is thus evident that " verbal " or " total " inspiration is in better agreement with the laws of

[1] Franzelin, *op. cit.*, p. 322 ff.

[2] This is fundamental in order to establish the fuller sense which God prepares in the words, even though the author whom he made choose them is unconscious of this fuller meaning; see p. 150 f.

[3] See Lagrange in *Revue Biblique*, New Series 3 (1906) 308.

psychology. Here we have an additional proof that the truly Thomistic theory of the way in which God moves man makes the whole process of inspiration and the composition of the sacred book more intelligible and more human, without, for all that, being any the less divine.

B) Inspiration Extends to all who Took Part in the Composition of the Book.

Modern biblical criticism makes us more and more aware that the origin of Holy Scripture was often a very complex matter, especially as regards the Old Testament. The old idea of a single author personally composing and writing the entire work which bears his name has gradually had to give way to less simple but more realistic conceptions. Many of the prophetic books today appear to be collections—sometimes rather disorderly collections — of oracles and speeches compiled by later disciples. Some of these are perhaps not even the work of the principal prophet to whom they were ascribed. Instead of believing that a given sapiential book is the work of Solomon, we distinguish in it numerous fragments from different sources. As for the five books of the Pentateuch, very few exegetes today would dare to hold that they were written in their entirety by the hand of Moses.

This is not the place to investigate these critical problems. We do not even say that all of them have been solved. What is important is that they have been raised and that, in some case or other, we are forced to admit that the sacred books, in their present state, have undergone many alterations, that they contain many glosses, or even entire sections which are the work of diverse hands — in short that, besides the known authors, many anonymous authors or collaborators have had a share in their composition.

What interests us is the theological question which results from all this: how are we to conceive the action of inspiration in such a complex process? We would be hard put for an answer if we insisted upon Franzelin's solution. Did God reveal or suggest his thoughts to all those who took up the pen to add something to the inspired work? Undoubtedly this is possible, strictly speaking, in a situation where their addition was of a doctrinal character. But what are we to say if these men did nothing but insert some element of no intellectual significance, v.g., merely improve the style? Besides the inspiration-revelation which communicates God's thoughts to man, Franzelin admits only a negative assistance as a protection

for the literary composition. Are we then to consider those alterations which do not really affect the thought as not properly inspired?

Our distinction between revelation and inspiration and our insistence on the importance of the practical judgment seem to offer easier solutions to these problems. If inspiration does not essentially demand either the revelation or even the suggestion of truths already conceived by God, but implies only a light and an impulse directed toward the writing of a book, there is obviously no difficulty in holding that everyone who had a hand in the composition of the book was favored with this charism. It is enough that someone has decided, under the divine light, that such a substitution or addition would make the work more useful and beneficial. This much is necessary and sufficient in order that the altered or completed text which leaves his hands may be genuinely inspired.

We therefore admit that the charism of inspiration may have been shared by a large number of individuals, but in different degrees. As in the case of the human faculties, the distribution of the divine influence must here be conceived in an analogical and proportional way. The share which each one receives of this influence will depend on the extent to which he collaborates in the composition of the sacred books. This can occur in the most varied ways, beginning with the known prophet who consciously receives divine revelations and personally writes them down, and extending to the anonymous editor who makes only some slight alteration in the sacred text, without even being aware that God is inspiring him to do so. It even includes the case of the man who does nothing but introduce a profane book into the Canon of Sacred Scripture because he has discovered in it, under the light of inspiration, a meaning which is applicable to the things of God.[1] Between these extremes we might cite the case of a secretary-editor, such as the editor of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who composes a writing for which the Apostle has given him only the main ideas. He is obviously inspired to the extent — a rather large extent — to which he contributes to the production of the work. On the other hand, the case of the simple copyist must be considered as falling outside of the influence of inspiration: he has no real share in the composition of the sacred book. But this condition would

[1] As is well known, some very competent exegetes explain in this way the origin of the *Song of Songs*.

change if he deliberately allowed himself to correct the text which he was copying, and if his correction were accepted in the Church's canonical text. [1]

Let us not forget this last, indispensable condition. In the final analysis we have no way of knowing the existence of the charism of inspiration other than the authority of the Church presenting us with a text which she declares to be canonical and inspired. We say, then, that whoever has contributed to the composition of *this text* can and must have participated, according to his degree, in the gift of inspiration. And our conception of this charism permits us to see how it might be present in many minds in the most varied ways. It is hardly likely that we can know in detail how it was distributed. It matters little that many inspired writers must remain forever unknown to us. The question of inspiration is entirely distinct from that of authenticity. And if biblical criticism sometimes call the latter into question, it in no way touches the former. A certain book may not be the work of the author to whom it was formerly attributed. It is nevertheless inspired, since it is contained in Holy Scripture. [2]

Should we not go further, go back beyond the various collaborators in the writing of the book to those who prepared for this writing by their words and deeds? [3] Before God had his history of salvation written down, he had it delivered orally, and even before that he had it lived. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the patriarchs, Judges, and kings to play a role in the drama of salvation (Is 63: 11 ff. for Moses; Jgs 15:14 for Samson). The same Spirit had the prophets or the Apostles speak many things which directly served the education of the People of God, though they have not all been collected in the Scriptures. These are other aspects of inspiration which, though distinct from scriptural inspiration, do not oppose but complement it.

[1] On the problem of the inspiration of the Septuagint, which the early Church received as its canonical Bible, cf. *infra*, p. 146.

[2] This does not mean that the problems of authenticity become secondary and no longer concern faith. They can be supremely important for other reasons. Thus it would not be inconsequential if one of the Gospels were not by the apostle or evangelist to whom tradition ascribes it. While remaining inspired, it would lose its authority as the testimony of an eyewitness.

[3] The following reflections, to the end of this Section, are a supplement to the first edition. They are more fully developed in *Sacra Pagina* I, 86-99.

They deserve a terminology of their own, for example, *dramatic* (in the etymological sense of the word) and *prophetic* or *apostolic* inspiration; they differ from *hagiographical* inspiration which is proper to the sacred writers. For these categories partial appeal may be made to the distinction set up by St. Thomas himself (q. 173, a. 4) between the prophetic charism *(ad aliquid apprehendendum)* and the impulses *(ad aliquid loquendum* and *ad aliquid faciendum)* which accompany them; see also q. 171, a. 1; q. 174, a. 3. The point of view, however, is different, and here again the emphasis must be shifted. St. Thomas is making a formal study of the charism of prophecy; he is concerned only with secondary activities which in the same man accompany the principal activity of knowledge.[1] We, on the other hand, are considering the Sacred Books and the history of Revelation in its concrete totality; our concern is with activities which were principal, even unique, in inspired men, and which characterize their social — or better, ecclesiastical — mission in the formation of the People of God. In the history of salvation their inspired acts or discourses are set apart from the writings in which they have been partially collected; they have a value of their own and, though they have prepared for the book, they are vaster than it, for not everything has been deposited in the book.

Such distinctions are rich in consequences. Thus, "dramatic" inspiration will serve as a theological foundation for the typical sense, i.e., the meaning which God has put into the events themselves (cf. p. 151); "prophetic" or "apostolic" inspiration will do the same for Tradition, that oral and living transmission of the Revelation, which has been condensed in the Scripture, but which overflows and waters it.

These distinctions will shed light on still other problems, for example, that of the possible divergence between the word of a biblical personage and the way the sacred writer uses it;[2] or, again, the false

[1] St. Thomas (q. 174, a. 3) indeed considers for its own sake the inspiration of Samson, but it is significant that he judges it to be "the lowest grade of prophecy"; this is because he is speaking from the standpoint of knowledge. Such inspiration is entirely on the periphery of his subject.

[2] See *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956) 421 f., and *Sacra Pagina* I, 86-99 : a study of the problem of St. Peter's speech as reported in Mt 16:16.

problem arising from the question whether the inspiration of the Sacred Book ought not to be limited to the "last editor!"

Likewise, they can do justice to the expression, "collective" inspiration (in the correct sense), by supplying safeguards against any danger in it. Indeed, the inspiring charism circulates through the entire Holy People and calls for multiple and diverse energies. But it does not lay hold on some anonymous and shapeless mass; it illuminates and directs a structured society through individuals chosen and personally endowed with charisms to serve the group. There is here an anticipated realization, with special application to the constitution of the revealed message, of the Holy Spirit's charismatic action in the Church as St. Paul depicts it. Obviously, this diffusion, homogeneous but diverse, flowing from one source but with many ramifications, must always be conceived analogously and proportionally.

The division of the charism of inspiration here proposed from the viewpoint of ecclesiastical missions in the development of the Revelation differs from that established above (p. 110 f.); the latter starts from the psychological varieties of human activity. The terminology can be assembled as follows: *Biblical* inspiration (as distinct from *ecclesiastical* inspiration; see p. 165, note 2) may be termed *cognitive* (an illumination of the understanding), *oratorical* (a practical impulse to compose a discourse), or *scriptural* (a practical impulse to compose a book); *biblical* inspiration will be *dramatic, prophetic-apostolic,* or *hagiographical,* according as it moves a man to communicate the divine message by his concrete life, by his words, or by his writings. Further, these two divisions flow into one another and blend in different ways; see p. 111, note 1.

C) Inspiration Extends to the Entire Content of Holy Scripture.

Finally, we have no difficulty in accepting as inspired the whole of Sacred Scripture in all its parts.

Some suggested that inspiration be limited to "res fidei et morum," but the Church has clearly condemned this restriction as an error. The Vatican Council, repeating a decree of the Council of Trent (*DB* 783 f.; *EB* 42-45 [57-60]), had already declared "sacred and canonical," and therefore inspired, all the books of the Old and New Testament with all their parts: "Veteris et Novi Testamenti

libri integri cum omnibus suis partibus" (*DB* 1787; *EB* 62 [72]). *Providentissimus,* in answer to new errors, explicitly condemned the restriction of scriptural inspiration to matters of faith and morals (*DB* 1950; *EB* 109 [124]).

Once again, this restriction is merely the result of a false notion of inspiration. If inspiration is thought of as a revelation dictating God's thoughts, it does actually seem difficult to apply it to the large number of incidental and profane elements which are contained in the Bible but which do not present any divine teaching. One is thus led to restrict inspiration to matters which God truly wishes to teach to men, that is to say, to doctrinal and moral matters.

But if inspiration is conceived as an action which causes the human mind to think and to work with a view to producing a concrete book, the question takes on a different aspect. On the one hand, its influence necessarily extends to the entire book, since the entire book is the result of the human effort operating under the divine impulse. On the other hand, this total influence causes no difficulty since it does not amount to making each element in the book the revelation of a divine thought.

When it is said that the minor details are inspired exactly as are the essentials, this does not mean that they are inspired to the same degree, or for their own sake. They are inspired in a subordinate capacity, to the extent that they act as a valuable adjunct to the essentials. The sacred writer actually intends to write only for the glory of God, that is to say, in practice, to acquaint his readers with the things of God and to improve their moral life. But writing as a man for other men, he uses a thousand different devices to win acceptance for his message. Wishing to instruct and to edify, he does not think it beneath him to please and to entertain. No detail seems superfluous to him provided it contributes to making his book more beautiful, more pleasant, and therefore more useful. When he writes that Tobit's dog wagged its tail, he does so with the deliberate art of a narrator who wishes to catch the interest of his readers by means of the picturesque. But he does not affirm this detail for itself; he uses it only in relation to his entire book, in accord with its admittedly very modest role as a literary ornament. In like manner, each element of the work must be judged according to its contribution to the over-all effect; we cannot, if we wish to be faithful to the author's

intentions, separate it from its context and assign it an absolute value; we must look at it in the whole into which it has been inserted and then evaluate its relative worth.

Our theory of inspiration permits us to apply these fundamental rules, which are valid for every human book, to the sacred books themselves. By causing the human mind to operate without violating its proper mode of action, the influence of inspiration actually penetrates everything which results from that operation, but it guarantees each element only to the extent that the author intends it, that is to say, according to the role which each plays in the work as a whole. God wished, as did his interpreter, to speak to us of the tail of Tobit's dog. Hence this detail is inspired as is all the rest. But it is willed and inspired to the extent—here a very slight extent—that it contributes to the effect of the book. And so of each element.

In other words, here again the " total " distribution of inspiration must be conceived in an analogous and proportional way. As with the various faculties of the writer and the different authors who have collaborated in making the Bible, so too all the parts of the Sacred Book have a share in the divine influence of inspiration, but in widely varying degrees. We would be misrepresenting the divine gift if we failed to recognize this scale of values and demanded that each element in Scripture, taken as an absolute, offer the same divine guarantees of truth, beauty, moral utility, etc.

A certain element of primary importance—the expression of some dogmatic truth — will be fully illuminated; whence its perfection of truth, clarity, and lucidity; whence also its fully guaranteed expression. For even its verbal formulation will receive a very special share of the divine influence, commensurate to the supreme importance of its content. On the other hand, a certain secondary element, or even one of trivial importance, will receive only a very dim and distant ray of the divine charism, just enough to cause it to be inserted in this spot to which it adds its slight shade of meaning, while in all other respects its substance can remain full of imperfections. [1]

* * *

[1] On St. Thomas's distinction between the dogmas *de substantia fidei* and the *credibilia per accidens* in the Bible, see Lagrange in *Revue Biblique* 9 (1900) 136.

We might illustrate these reflections by means of an allegory.

Let us take a cathedral. If we analyze it we discover that it possesses elements of varying importance: the foundation stones and the huge pillars differ in worth from the ruble used for filling; the vault-ribs have a different value than the small blocks resting on them. And even among the indispensable elements there are many shades of difference: the pillars in the choir support more weight than the columns in the side asiles, etc. But all these diverse elements go to make up one and the same monument, and each one plays its proportionate part in the over-all effect. This edifice which rises up as a single unit is vibrant with an immense total dynamism which is diffused proportionately through all its parts. The force which gives it cohesion and thrusts it skyward passes through every stone, no less through the base of the mighty pillars than through the summit of the spire. But it passes through each stone only according to its position and function in the whole. In short, the force is one and everywhere the same in its essence, but it is diffused through the diverse elements analogically, with different quantities and even infinitely varied formalities.

The Bible is this cathedral. Its architect is God. The craftsmen and laborers are the sacred writers. The materials are the different elements of the Sacred Book. The force which vibrates through the entire monument is inspiration.

Those who wish to restrict inspiration to "matters of faith and morals" are like the man who would be willing to tear down all the non-essential elements of the cathedral and keep only the framework — the essential structure, the ribs — which is strictly necessary in order that it remain standing. Certainly the monument would remain standing, but it would be hideous and uninhabitable; all those so-called accessories played their part in ornamenting and brightening it. If the Bible were thus stripped, it would still contain the essentials of revelation, but it would be dry, lacking human beauty, psychologically uninhabitable. This is not what the divine Architect wanted when he decided to construct this edifice to shelter the religious thought of mankind.

Those who reject "total" inspiration *(ad verba)* try to make us believe that the dynamism of the cathedral passes indeed through the stones, but not through the particles of the stone. What is a stone

without the particles which make it up? What is a thought without the words which clothe it? Ideas and judgments are necessarily embodied in words chosen and arranged in such and such a way, just as a stone is made up of particles of such and such a nature, more or less dense or closely packed. The building materials of a St. Paul are not the same as those of a St. John; we mean their vocabulary and their literary style.

And even their thoughts differ. Variety conduces to the beauty of a cathedral. And so the architect entrusts the north portal to one artist and the south portal to another. Each one will contribute his artistry and his imagery, and the resulting symphony in stone will be all the more artistic for it. Thus God uses an Isaiah and a Jeremiah, a St. Mark and a St. Luke, to erect his monument in which each mind will find the sustenance which suits it, and perhaps a favorite corner in which it can pray with greater fervor.

Besides these first class artists, many craftsmen and laborers contribute their share of knowledge and toil; the cathedral is a collective work. So too is the Bible, with its numerous workmen, often anonymous, who have erected it stone by stone.

Along comes the theorist who has no understanding of the living cathedral and who, in order to study it, razes it and arranges all its stones side by side, on the same level, in a museum gallery; it is easy for him now to be shocked at the imperfections in a certain stone which came from the upper vaulting and which, since it had little weight to support, might be of inferior quality or, since it was seen only from afar, might be only roughly polished. This is how the purely speculative theologian would act were he to consider the Bible as a museum of "sed contra's" in which everything is of the same value, and any verse at all can be considered in itself, apart from the whole, and must present the same guarantees of divine truth and perfection. He will have many occasions to be shocked.

If we wish truly to understand this divine monument which is the Bible, we must never lose sight of its vital unity. To this end we must spare no effort, examine the triforia as well as the nave, climb up to the tribunes and the roof, study each element in the place it occupies where alone it takes on its true worth. It is only after such minute study and long years of familiarity that we will be able fully to grasp the meaning of the whole as well as of each

detail. Then we will no longer be surprised at anything; we will, on the contrary, perceive such a splendor of order as could be attributed only to the hand of God.

4. INERRANCY

A) Inerrancy is not the purpose of inspiration; it is its result — or better, it is one among several of its results. It would be its only result if God's sole purpose in enlightening his messenger was to have him teach truths. Now this is not the case. Instruction is only one of the aims proposed to the practical reason of the inspired subject; there are other ends which belong especially to the affective order, such as to encourage, console, reprimand, etc. Truth will then be one of the qualities of the inspired word, but not the only one; it will stand side by side with holiness, beauty, persuasive force, imaginative appeal, etc. [1]

This point has been too often misunderstood, and excessive importance has been attributed to the single aspect of truth. Men have become bewitched by it and have tried to find it in the least phrase of Scripture. This has come about — once again we mention it—because they have equated inspiration and revelation and have neglected the role of the practical judgment with its varied aims. The theory developed above restores the truth of Scripture, and the inerrancy which guarantees it, to their rightful place among the effects of inspiration — the first place perhaps, but not the only one.

Inerrancy, then, does not come into play as often as inspiration, or at least not in the same way. There is no doubt that, when God teaches and insofar as he teaches, he can neither be deceived nor deceive us; his word is necessarily exempt from all error. This is what

[1] This point may be clarified by a comparison with the charism of infallibility. Infallibility is only a negative assistance, having for its formal object to guarantee against error, and bearing solely on " res fidei et morum " which are subject to the decision of the Church. Inerrancy is the specific goal of infallibility. Inspiration is a positive influence which bears on the entire content of the sacred book, and which, among other effects, guarantees the infallible truth of this content to the extent that God teaches therein. It is, therefore, obvious that the infallibility of the Church is not a substitute for inspiration, or a lower order of inspiration, as we are sometimes led to believe; it is a charism of a different order.

is called the privilege of " inerrancy. " But God is not always teaching and, when he has his interpreter speak without vouching for the truth of his statement, inspiration operates without entailing inerrancy; or, more exactly, in such a case inerrancy consists precisely in preventing the interpreter from vouching for the truth of matters which are not pertinent to the teaching willed by God. As a matter of fact, the latter is not a distinct charism; it is a corollary of inspiration which comes into play only when inspiration affects the speculative judgment and to the extent that it enlightens it. [1]

That it is a corollary is clearly indicated by the formulas employed in the official documents. [2] This fact explains why inerrancy by itself has never been made the object of an explicit solemn declaration of the Church's Magisterium. [3] Inerrancy is certainly a matter of faith, but it is the object only of joint definitions, in the texts dealing with inspiration of which it is an immediate and necessary result. It is part of one and the same dogma, as we read in a decree of the Biblical Commission: " prae oculis habitis . . . dogmate item catholico de inspiratione et inerrantia sacrarum Scripturarum " (*DB* 2180; *EB* 433 [420]).

B) If instruction is not the sole end of inspiration it is none the less the most fundamental element of the divine education. For

[1] We could perhaps speak of a certain inerrancy in the practical judgment. Thus God does not err when he makes his interpreter choose a certain means of expression in view of a particular end for the sacred book. This means is actually the one best adapted to achieve that end; here, we have a sort of practical truth. But this is only an improper aspect of inerrancy; it is not taken into account when we speak of inerrancy, and of itself gives rise to no difficulty. We may therefore omit it.

[2] *Providentissimus:* " tantum vero abest ut divinae inspirationi error ullus subesse possit, ut ea per se ipsa, non modo errorem excludat omnem, sed tam necessario excludat et respuat, quam necessarium est, Deum, summam Veritatem, nullius omnino erroris auctorem esse " (*DB* 1951; *EB* 109 [124]).

Also *Spiritus Paraclitus:* " Porro cum divina Sacrorum Librorum inspiratione summaque eorumdem auctoritate docet Hieronymus immunitatem et omni ab errore et fallacia vacuitatem necessario cohaerere " (*EB* 463 [450]).

[3] We might, however, call attention to the 14th point of the Letter of Clement VI *Super quibusdam* on the errors of the Armenians: " si credidisti et credis Novum et Vetus Testamentum in omnibus libris, quos Romanae Ecclesiae nobis tradidit auctoritas, veritatem indubiam per omnia continere " (*DB* 570 r; *EB* 31 [46]).

in us everything begins with knowledge. Consequently, though truth is not the sole quality of the sacred books, it is nevertheless the primary one.

Thus it is all the more important to know how to determine exactly when the truth of a statement is being vouched for, and to what extent. Now here we must introduce some distinctions. Instruction involves many modes of expression which commit the writer's thought — and hence the truth of his statement — to a greater or lesser degree. It all depends on his ideas, his convictions, his intentions. Since God has seen fit to submit the expression of his message to the conditions of human psychology, we have only to analyze briefly the general nature of truth in the judgment, and then apply our findings to the case of an inspired judgment.

Truth is the " adequatio rei et intellectus. " It exists only in the judgment. And by " judgment " we obviously do not mean every proposition made up of subject, verb, and predicate, but the formal act by which the intellect *(intellectus)* affirms its conformity *(adequatio)* to the object of knowledge *(res)*. Now this formal judgment, and hence the truth which it contains, is subject to limitation from three principal sources:

1) First, the object of the mind's knowledge is not the thing in itself *(objectum materiale)*, but a certain " representation " which is drawn from it by " conception " and which is considered in isolation *(objectum formale)*. This *formal object* can, at least in theory, express the material object in its very essence. Actually, it is more often restricted to one limited aspect which may be of greater or less importance and which varies according to the interest of the knowing subject. An astronomer studies the moon under its formality of celestial body; a poet speaks of it from an aesthetic point of view.

Here we have the first source of limitation of the judgment, and it is one which must never be forgotten. An author does not speak of everything in an absolute way; we must always inquire into his point of view. He tells the truth or he is mistaken only within the limits of the field of vision which he has established for himself and in which he forms his judgment.

2) Furthermore, he does not always make an *affirmation*. He may assent either totally or in a restricted way to the objective truth

contained in the proposition which he is enunciating. Sometimes his affirmation will be categorical; sometimes it will be made with reservations of one sort or another: he accepts it as probable, he thinks it likely, he considers it possible, a matter of conjecture, etc. This all depends on the investigation which has preceded his judgment and which authorizes him to assent more or less firmly, according as it has been fruitful or sterile, diligent or cursory.

This is a second source of limitation and it is one which arises from the subject rather than the object. The author's mind is not committed, and hence the truth of his judgment is not at stake, except according to the note by which he qualifies his conformity with the object about which he is thinking. We can reproach him for being mistaken if he falsifies the degree of certitude which the matter of his judgment objectively warrants; for example, if he categorically affirms something which is in reality only doubtful, or, on the contrary, presents something certain as impossible to prove. But he cannot be denied the right to limit the extent of his own subjective conviction and to involve himself only to the extent he wishes. We must therefore respect the varying degrees of his assent, rather than take all his sentences as categorical affirmations.

3) Finally, a third factor must be considered, one which transfers the question from the intellectual to the moral order and introduces the possibility not that the author will himself be mistaken, but that he will deceive others. Here we are concerned with the *communication* of the ideas to the minds of the hearers or readers. The formulation of the judgment in the intimacy of the author's mind may be followed or not by the communication of this judgment to other minds. The theoretical statement,[1] which up to the present has been made for its own sake, now becomes a " teaching. " A new factor has come into play: it is the *intention* which the judging mind has of offering us its judgment, that is to say, of presenting it to us for our assent.

This is the third source of limitation of the judgment and its truth. The author assumes a social responsibility only for what he

[1] After A. Lefèvre in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955) 452. I am using the more neutral term " statement " in place of the term " affirmation " which was too categorical.

voluntarily submits to another for his assent. He cannot be accused of deceiving us if this intention is lacking. Now this can happen in several ways: he may involuntarily betray an opinion which he actually has, but does not mean to propose for the reader's assent; or he may deliberately adopt a fictional type of literary presentation, intending not to be believed in what he appears to be affirming.

In this last case, of course, the author must somehow or other indicate his intention, just as in the preceding cases he must let us know, by the words he uses, from what point of view he is speaking and to what extent he is making an affirmation. Once the reader has been furnished with these indications, which he discovers by a conscientious study of the text, he must remain within the limits chosen by the author, in order to be able to judge honestly whether the latter is correct or mistaken, whether he is telling the truth or misleading his readers.

We have spoken above of the influence of the practical judgment on the speculative judgment. It is this influence which, in the last analysis, explains these limitations which we have just examined. If the author restricts himself to one or other aspect of the matter he is treating, he does so in view of the particular objective for which he is writing his book. This is also why he investigates the matter more or less thoroughly, and why he sometimes makes categorical affirmations and at other times is content to make suggestions or passing references without committing himself. Finally, whether he employs the strictly didactic method or prefers to use the figurative language of fiction, it is still in accord with the purpose he has in writing.

In the last analysis, then, the best way for the reader really to understand the author and to be faithful to his thought will be to acquaint himself with his practical intentions, to discover why he is writing and what interests he has at heart in his work.

C) The inspired author thinks and writes like any other man, but under a special divine impulse. As a result, his judgments and the truths they contain have a divine authority. It is therefore all the more important to discern their exact significance in order to accept with faith and reverence what the author is teaching, and also in order not to attribute to God errors which neither he nor his interpreter has actually made.

1) First of all, therefore, we will be careful to determine the sacred writer's *formal object*, that is to say, the point of view from which he is treating his subject. For example, we will not consider the Bible to be a work in astronomy or the natural sciences, as Concordism recently did. It is quite clear that the inspired author, and behind him God, treats many subjects only for their religious interest. The sun and the moon speak to him of the wisdom and omnipotence of God; he is not interested in the scientific laws which govern their revolutions.

It would, however, be an oversimplification to banish from consideration everything which does not directly concern faith and morals. We would fall back into the condemned error which limits, if not inspiration, then at least inerrancy to the " res fidei et morum. " [1] And we would be going against the evidence, for there is no denying the sacred writers' interest in thoroughly profane subjects; this is especially true of history. The fact remains, however, that even then, under the divine impulse, they retain their ultimate preoccupation with the religious order, and this has an influence on the way in which they look at the facts. Scientific history, which seeks the minutest accuracy for its own sake, is one thing; quite different is history of a religious or apologetic tendency, which is intent on bringing out the important lessons from the dusty past and is concerned with events for this sole purpose. While it assuredly does not falsify the events, it does not worry about minute exactitude.

Now this is merely an example. The rule to be followed is always to look for the formal aspect which interests the sacred author in the subject he is treating. It is this aspect alone which enters into the dynamism of the book. It is on this point that he judges and that he commits himself. It is therefore this alone which God wishes to tell us, which he illuminates, and which receives the benefit of inspiration and inerrancy. [2]

2) The *affirmations* of the sacred author, like those of any human author, are not necessarily categorical. This would be the case if he received the thoughts of God ready-made, for in God truth is never

[1] See *Spiritus Paraclitus* (*DB* 2186; *EB* 467 [454]).

[2] For fuller discussion, see *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956) 418-21.

uncertain. [1] It is, therefore, actually the case whenever " revelations " are granted him. Then the truth imposes itself on him with an evidence which allows no room for doubt. This is not so, however, when he is granted only an inspiration, and when God makes him seek out the truth in his own human fashion. Then he attains a greater or less degree of certitude as it pleases God to enlighten him, and he modifies his assertion accordingly.

It is for this qualified statement [2] that God accepts the responsibility, and for this alone. To be sure, he cannot permit his interpreter to strengthen or weaken it unduly in relation to the objective order, that is, to present as certain what is really doubtful, or to affirm as only doubtful what is in fact certain. For in that case there would be an error. But he authorizes him — or rather impels him — to limit his own inquiry and subsequently his personal assent, to the degree of certitude demanded by the subject's importance in the over-all plan of the book. On a point of capital importance he will be stimulated to pursue his investigation until he has obtained a solid conviction. On another point of secondary interest he will be allowed to speak briefly, making only a passing reference or conjecture. This reduction of cognitive activity may reach a point where all speculative judgment is suspended. That depends on the directives of the practical reason, and ultimately on the ends which God has proposed to it. [3]

[1] In the case of a minatory prophecy which will not necessarily be carried out, there is question not of an uncertain truth, but of a conditional truth, certain in its own order, i.e., the normal connection between such a cause and such an effect (see Explanatory Note 18).

[2] See p. 135, note 1.

[3] In this connection we may look into the interesting question of citations. When an author cites another's words, to what extent does he make a judgment and vouch for the truth of the words cited?

That depends on the particular case. It is possible for him to approve, to disapprove, or to do neither.

[1] In this last case, he makes no speculative judgment on the content of his citation. He is satisfied with finding it suitable for the purposes of his book. This is a practical judgment which, being inspired, possesses that " practical truth " of which we have spoken above (p. 133, note 1). It is truly suitable in God's judgment to make this citation in Scripture, for example, in order to keep this document for posterity. But it is not otherwise guaranteed.

[2] If he approves or disapproves, this can be (a) because he has made

In accordance with these different degrees of affirmation the inspired author vouches more or less for the truth of what he says, and consequently makes God vouch for it to a greater or less extent, since the expression of his thought is immediately directed and endorsed by the Holy Spirit.

3) Can we now apply to the sacred authors the third reservation, *sc.*, that which concerns the *intention of communicating to another* an interior thought, an intention which entails the moral responsibility of telling the truth or deceiving?

To be sure, the distinction between "author" and "private person" is verified just as much — in fact, even more so — among those who are inspired as it is among ordinary men, and, in the case of the inspired writers, it takes on a very special importance. For, where an ordinary man is concerned, there is only an accidental difference between one formality and the other: he thinks for himself or for his public, but in both cases his thought remains exactly the same as far as its essence is concerned. But in the case of the inspired writer, the distinction broadens and takes on a theological significance: he is inspired only insofar as he is an "author"; he is not inspired as a "private person." The charismatic influence affects his mind only when he is to transmit a message in God's name, and to the

a personal judgment concerning the value of the opinion cited, or (b) simply on another's authority.

(a) In the former case, there is a speculative judgment which implicates the truth of the author's statement and the inerrancy of Scripture: the content of this citation is affirmed, or contradicted, with the same guarantee as anything else the writer himself asserts.

(b) In the second case, there is still, it would seem, a speculative judgment, which, however, no longer bears on the actual thought of the person cited, but rather on the fact of his natural credibility, or his supernatural credibility (if there is question of an inspired author, such as St. Luke citing a sermon of St. Paul). "This man whom I am citing is certainly telling the truth and deserves to be believed." Here we have a judgment of the speculative order, which vouches for a truth and is, therefore, favored with inerrancy. This suffices indirectly to guarantee the truth of what is alleged in the name of another. If this other was a profane author, his words thus embodied in Scripture receive the guarantee of scriptural inspiration. If he was a prophet or apostle his words possess a twofold inspiration — prophetic inspiration insofar as they are really his words, and scriptural inspiration insofar as they are quoted by the hagiographer.

extent that he devotes himself to this. At other times and apart from this precise activity, he is not specially enlightened. Whereas his thought as an inspired writer is elevated to the supernatural order, his thought as a private individual remains in the natural order, subject to error. This is a crucial difference and one, moreover, upon which all will agree.

But a more delicate problem presents itself. Is it not possible for the thoughts of the private individual somehow or other to slip into the work of the inspired writer? There is no watertight bulkhead between the two activities, natural and supernatural; it is one and the same mind which is doing the thinking. Are we not to expect, therefore, a certain compenetration?

Some have, on occasion, admitted this possibility and have thought that it offered a convenient solution to some difficulties. If a certain assertion of the Bible causes us embarrassment, why not say that the author proposed it on his own authority and not as the interpreter of the Holy Spirit? The reply of the Biblical Commission which we have already cited, in answer to the first difficulty, formally condemns this subterfuge (*DB* 2179; *EB* 432 [419]). It forbids anyone to hold that the Apostles, even while not teaching any error under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were nevertheless able to express (in their canonical epistles) personal, human ideas which might themselves be erroneous.

In the light of *dubium* 2 of the Decree cited above, the term "to express" appears to be understood of a statement which calls in a positive, though it may be reserved, way for the reader's approbation. What is denied is that the Holy Spirit may allow an inspired man to mingle with formal, guaranteed teaching his own erroneous personal views, without giving the reader any means of spotting them. To allow this would obviously be to destroy the authority of Scripture. It would also be contrary to the very idea of inspiration which we have worked out with the help of the Thomist doctrine: an impulse which totally subjects the mind of a man to the divine influence, which penetrates his will and his practical reason as well as his intellect, and which extends to the ultimate realization of the work, "ad verba." With such a close and complete compenetration of divine and human causality it is impossible that the writer express anything whatever contrary to the divine pleasure.

In accordance with this sovereignly efficacious direction, the divine influence will lead the author to teach only the message entrusted to him, and will keep him from giving the same guarantee to his personal views which have not been included in the message. *This, in brief, is what formally constitutes the privilege of inerrancy.* It prevents the inspired author from in any way introducing into the work which he is composing under the divine influence, the teaching of errors which might be the result of his own thought processes working outside the influence of inspiration.

Though God may restrain his interpreter from bringing his teaching to bear on them, he certainly cannot prevent him from using in one way or another these erroneous views and, consequently, from letting them show through in his text. For example, no one will deny that the biblical authors had now outmoded cosmological ideas in which they believed, and that they employed them in their writings because they were unable to think apart from contemporary categories. But they do not claim to be teaching them for their own sakes; they speak of them for a different purpose, *sc.*, to illustrate creation and divine providence. This is so because the charism which moves them to teach as theologians (inspiration) prevents them from posing as physicists (inerrancy). They do not vouch for their own private opinions, or even convictions, because God does not want them to do so and has them write accordingly. How will we know this? By objective study of the book; not of this or that proposition taken in isolation and considered as an absolute, but of the whole ensemble in which the intent of the author is expressed, and upon which depends the role of each individual proposition. We no longer say that this or that statement could not have been taught because it does not pertain to " faith or morals "; that would be merely a return to a false criterion which arose from atomistic analysis, and which stops with the material subjects of the text, forgetting the living mind which speaks in it.[1] Rather, we try to get into the intentions of this mind *as they are objectively manifested by the whole work*, or even to get into the intentions of God *by putting the work back into the ensemble of the Bible*. With this formal criterion and aided by serious and very careful exegesis, we can tell whether

[1] See *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956) 418-21.

But if one speaks, not of the Truth in itself, but of our manner of acquiring and expressing it, then the question takes on a new aspect. It is quite evident that we are unable to grasp the Truth in all its plenitude of certitude and objectivity. Our mind is finite. God made it to know and, to the extent that it really attains truth, it comes into contact with the absolute. But this is only a restricted extent, subject to those limitations of viewpoint, assent, and communication which we have just analyzed. If this is what is meant by "relative truth," then the expression can be allowed. Yet we must grant that it causes confusion. This is why it is dangerous and should preferably be avoided. We might better speak of "the relative expression of truth." [1]

A simile might clarify these reflections. For us the sun is a sort of absolute of light and heat. But passing clouds, the distance which separates us, and the inclination of the earth on its axis, are all able to introduce countless variations in its rays. Finally, we can examine its surface only piecemeal, or in a reflected image. The same is true of the sun of Truth. The brilliance of this absolute takes on many shades, depending on one's angle of vision and the more or less dense curtains of mind and word. Human things give us only a reflection of it and, even then, we catch only some of its rays.

In view of these explanations and distinctions, we may conclude as follows: it is indeed absolute Truth which speaks through Scripture. To the extent that it manifests itself it brings our minds into contact with the absolute. But it has chosen to make itself known to us by the instrumentality of human thought, thereby agreeing to submit to finite and relative modes of expression. We must always be mindful of this, not in order to debase it to our level of contingency, but, on the contrary, to free it from what is not properly its own, and to avoid imputing to it the veils and imperfections which it had to assume in order to make the splendor of its brilliance bearable to our eyes. Sometimes it will shine brightly and will reveal to us the most sublime mysteries; at other times it will cloak its light and allow only a few rays to filter through, those which are useful for the general economy of Revelation. It will never let itself be falsified by formal error,

[1] Fr. Bea expresses the same though differently: "Sua cuique generi literario est veritas" (*op. cit.*, p. 106, no. 90).

and this is enough to assure the faith of the believer. From this point it is up to the believer, by means of careful exegesis, to discover what the author is teaching him and to what extent he is teaching. For it is to this extent that God is pledging his Truth.

Inerrancy, like inspiration from which it derives, is a divine gift which is operative in all of Scripture, not univocally, but analogically.

5. EXEGESIS AND BIBLICAL CRITICISM

In order to know exactly what God has wished to tell us in his Holy Scripture, to discern his intentions, to sift out his teachings, to recognize when he is speaking without involving, or at least only partially involving, his own truth, we must make a very careful study of the text which the human author has drafted under his guidance. We must examine its style, fathom its thoughts, determine its literary type. For God accepts responsibility only for this concrete, limited message. Such is the conclusion which follows from all that we have said up to the present. This study will be the lofty but difficult task of exegesis. The exegete, taking into account the directives of Faith and the Magisterium, but proceeding according to his own scientific and critical methods, will devote himself to the task of reconstructing the original text, discovering its meaning, and verifying or evaluating its historical significance. It would be out of the question here to treat these methods at any length. We shall speak only briefly of them, in order to indicate their connection with the theological principles which have been worked out in the preceding analyses.

A) Textual Criticism.

The influence of inspiration extends, as we have said, even to the drafting of the text, *usque ad verba*. But this obviously refers to the original text as it came from the hands of the author (or authors) and was received into the Canon. Neither later corruptions nor translation into other languages have any share in the charism of inspiration. The Latin Vulgate is not inspired. Since it was composed after the close of the scriptural Canon, it can claim at most to offer a faithful translation.

The Greek version of the Septuagint poses a more delicate problem,[1] since it is less a literal translation than a rather free interpretation which was composed during the period of Revelation, and into which Alexandrian Judaism introduced new data, sometimes of great doctrinal importance, making this version a very important intermediary stage between the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. It is not hard to imagine that divine inspiration did not neglect such a critical phase in the growth of the Book. Actually, New Testament writers have most frequently cited the Old Testament in its Greek dress; they considered it in this form to be the word of God and based their arguments for the faith on texts where the Septuagint clearly goes beyond the Hebrew original. Most of the Fathers, too, including St. Augustine, maintained the inspiration of the Septuagint, not alone because of the unfortunate legend of the 70 elders, but also and more importantly because they saw in this Greek Bible a change deliberately prepared by the Holy Spirit for the universal Christian Church. Jerome's return to the *hebraica veritas* was a somewhat excessive reaction; his prestige caused the ancient tradition of the inspiration of the Septuagint to become suspect and practically abandoned, especially from the Renaissance to our own times. It has never been, however, officially rejected by the Church; the Council of Trent deliberately refrained from deciding for or against. The question is open and deserves reexamination precisely now when biblical criticism is rediscovering the great originality of this Greek "Targum," when a nicer historical sense is making us more clearly realize the importance of this link in the development of Revelation, and when, finally, a more flexible and comprehensive idea of inspiration, such as we have tried to develop here, easily overcomes the obstacle formerly created by the obvious human imperfections of this version.

In any event, it is extremely important to restore the original and inspired text, whatever it may be, to its pristine purity, as far as can be done with the help of manuscripts and versions which reflect the history of its transformations. Whence, too, the increased

[1] See P. Benoit, "La Septante est-elle inspirée?" in *Vom Wort des Lebens* (Max Meinertz Festschrift) (Münster, 1951), pp. 41-49; P. Auvray, "Comment se pose le problème de l'inspiration des Septantes," *Revue Biblique* 59 (1952) 321-36.

interest in ancient languages, both Semitic and Greek, since it was in the forms of these languages that God once saw fit to mold his message for mankind.

Especially during the past fifty years, which have witnessed such remarkable strides in these technical fields, exegetes have been pressingly urged by the Magisterium of the Church to undertake these labors of textual exegesis and ancient philology. In particular the latest Encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu* (September 30, 1943), earnestly reiterated the urgency of this work and explained that, while the "authenticity" (i.e., juridical authenticity) accorded to the Latin Vulgate by the Council of Trent guaranteed the substantial soundness of its doctrine, and therefore its authority in theological discussions, it by no means gave that text precedence over the original texts, which alone are inspired and to which we should first have recourse. [1]

B) Literary Criticism.

Once the text has been established, its meaning must be determined. To this end account must be taken of the two authors, divine and human, who have concurred in the production of the sacred book and whose close collaboration has made this book different from any other.

1) *The Primary Sense.*

It follows from what we have seen of inspiration that we must look first of all for *the meaning which the human author intended.* For this meaning is the immediate and essential effect of the influence of inspiration. This is what the Holy Spirit, as author of Holy Scripture, proposes to us first and foremost. Following St. Thomas (I, q. 1, a. 10: "sensus litteralis est quem auctor intendit"), it is often called the "literal" sense; but I prefer to call it the "primary" sense, in order to reckon with the "fuller" sense which is also found in the letter of the text, though it is not perceived by the author (see p. 150 f.). [2]

[1] See *AAS* 35 (1943) 306-09; *EB* [546-50].

[2] I am correcting the terminology adopted in my first edition (see the valid observations of A. Fernandez, "Sentido plenior, literal, típico, espiritual," *Biblica* 34 [1953] 305 f.). The previous terminology incorrectly mingled two distinctions taken from different viewpoints: the subjective viewpoint of the

This primary meaning, and it alone, is what we have been considering up to now in our analyses of the judgment; and we have done so designedly. For some are only too prone to ignore or despise it. It is true that, since inspiration is something utterly unique, other senses are possible; we shall speak later of this matter. But these other senses are erected upon the primary sense, which remains the indispensable foundation.

The primary sense is that which results immediately from the letter of the text, as the human author understood it and wanted to communicate it. It is found everywhere, for an author does not speak in order to say nothing. But it may be "proper" or "improper,"[1] according as the words are taken in their direct or their figurative meaning.[2]

Furthermore, it is normally *one (unicus)*, for a reasonable author wants to say only one thing at a time. He might, to be sure, choose words which have a double meaning. Human language lends itself to many ambiguities. But such "plays on words" are good only to provide amusement by leaving the mind in a state of incertitude. Equivocation is a defect which every profane author seeks to avoid; it is all the more unsuited to the word of God. It is of the utmost

author's knowledge (the "primary" sense which he perceives, the "secondary" sense which escapes him) and the objective viewpoint of the reality which God has charged with meaning (the "literal" sense of the words, the "typical" sense of things). It is this second distinction which St. Thomas actually makes *(loc. cit.)*: "Prima significatio, qua voces significant res, pertinet ad primum sensum, qui est sensus historicus vel litteralis. Illa vero significatio, qua res significatae per voces iterum res alias significant, dicitur sensus spiritualis." Consequently, he identifies the literal sense with what the author intended, i.e., with our "primary" sense, because in his time the category of the "fuller" sense was, if not ignored in practice, at least not yet developed in theory.

[1] Improper or figurative modes of expression include, e.g., synecdoche, metonymy, simile, metaphor, or their longer forms, parable, allegory, or even fable and riddle.

[2] Origen, to be sure, wrote that certain sacred texts "had no corporeal sense"; but he understood by this the *proper* literal sense, and promptly conceded that the same texts have a figurative sense, which is itself also a literal sense. See A. Fernandez, S.J., in *Institutiones Biblicae I* (Rome, 1925) 297; de Lubac, S.J., *Origène: Homélies sur la Genèse* (Paris, 1943) p. 43 ff.

importance to know without any ambiguity what God is saying and asking of men. [1]

Of course, the multiplicity of literal senses which we here reject applies only to those meanings which are genuinely disparate, absolutely independent of one another, and which introduce equivocation into the very marrow of the text. It would be otherwise if it were a question of varied interpretations of one and the same word whose meaning is obscure. This would be rather a situation involving secondary and adapted senses, such as those of which we shall speak later on (p. 152), senses which revolve about one single but vague primary meaning. This is what has led to that " plurality of literal senses " held by St. Augustine and St. Thomas, which has been the subject of so much discussion. [2]

2) *Secondary Senses.*

But the human author of the sacred text is not alone; he is led by the divine Spirit who outstrips him to an infinite degree. This fact may give rise in his work to other senses beyond the primary, such as are unknown in the works of profane authors. A principal cause, as we have insisted, moves its instrument to operate according to the instrument's own proper mode of action; but this does not mean that it is brought down to the level of the instrument or is confined within its limitations. The principal cause retains its superior power and virtuality, which are manifested in the effect over and above the influence of the instrument.

This is all the more true when the principal cause is God, in comparison with whom the most gifted man is only a " defective "

[1] The Fourth Gospel deliberately employs expressions whose material meaning, the one immediately grasped by Jesus' audience, must give way to a spiritual meaning (Jn 2: 19-21; 3: 3-5; 4: 10-14; 6: 33-35; etc.). But this pedagogical method is not just a game of equivocations since between the two possible meanings there is a real and organic bond such as exists between the " proper " and the " metaphorical " sense.

[2] See F. Talon, S.J., " S. Augustin a-t-il réellement enseigné la pluralité des sens littéraux dans l'Ecriture? " *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 77 (1921) 24-26; Blanche O.P., " Le sens littéral des Ecritures d'après S. Thomas d'Aquin, " *Revue Thomiste* 14 (1906) 207-09; P. Synave, O.P., " La doctrine de S. Thomas d'Aquin sur le sens littéral des Ecritures, " *Revue Biblique* 35 (1926) 61-64.

instrument (q. 173, a. 4). The divine Spirit who makes use of a human mind to communicate with men does not thereby surrender the possibility of ever going beyond the latter's narrow limitations. He agrees not to break away from it completely by using unexpected and disparate senses which would make his message completely obscure. Yet God reserves the right to go beyond his interpreter *in the same direction as his thought is tending*, and to enrich his words by broadening their meaning and adding new overtones which, far from confusing or contradicting this thought, will actually deepen and extend it. Thus the primary meaning of Scripture may be supplemented by secondary meanings which prolong and amplify it. [1]

3) *The Fuller and Typical Senses.* [2]

The divine Spirit surpasses the mind of his interpreter first of all in that he is the author of the entire Bible, and not merely of some particular book. He has remained steadfastly at work all the while his collaborators have been following one another in a long series. As a result, even though they were unaware of it, the ideas and the words which they received from his inspiration took on a much broader and loftier significance. In his progressive revelation the later, definitive phases have brought with them a clarification of the earlier, preparatory ones. This may have taken place in either of two principal ways:

a) The very *words* used by the earlier inspired writers have acquired, in the vast perspective of the divine plan, a wealth and fullness of meaning undreamed of by their first authors, but from which future readers were to draw profit. It is clear, for example, that when men of later ages were able to compare the messianic prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel with one another, or even with their final fulfilment in Christ, they had a much clearer and deeper understanding of them than had even the first recipients of these revelations. Or, to cite another example, the knowledge

[1] With regard to these secondary senses the prophet becomes an instrument in the proper sense, and no longer only in the broad sense; see *supra*, p. 81 ff. and p. 118 f.

[2] In my first edition, I followed St. Thomas in using the term " spiritual, " but now I prefer the more exact and more formal term " typical "; thus, the " spiritual " sense can include both the " typical " and the " fuller " senses.

of the mystery of the Trinity has enabled us to read the words of the Old Testament on Wisdom in a new light. In this way God has made use of his own word as a commentary upon itself and has clarified the ancient oracles by means of the new, giving them a deeper meaning which is called the " *sensus plenior* " or " *fuller* " sense.

b) Moreover, the Holy Spirit has not been satisfied with thus enriching the words of his human interpreters. In his omnipotence he has caused the very *objects* expressed by these words — objects which he himself has raised up for this purpose — to be signs of his thought.[1] This is what is called the " *spiritual* " or, as some term it, the " *typical* " or " *mystical* " sense. Thus he impelled Moses to lift up a bronze serpent in the desert; he then stimulated the hagiographer to recount this narrative of miraculous cures: this is the primary sense. But beyond this primary sense he had another one in view; this healing serpent mounted on a pole was to be the figure of Christ on the Cross: this is the typical sense which is based on the primary sense and transcends it.[2]

c) Unlike the primary sense, the " fuller " and " typical " senses were unknown to the human author unless God made them known to him by special revelation. The human author was not aware of them and did not consciously intend to express them. They are therefore secondary senses.

Nevertheless, they derive immediately from Scripture, that is, from the events which it recounts (typical sense) or from the comparison of several of its passages (fuller sense). That is why they properly deserve to be called " scriptural " senses. They were directly intended and expressed *in the sacred text*, if not by its human author, then at least by its divine author.[3]

[1] Through inspiration to act or " dramatic " inspiration; see *supra*, p. 126.

[2] This typical sense is ordinarily divided into: *allegorical*, *tropological* or *moral*, and *anagogical*, accordingly as things under the Old Law are considered in their application to the messianic Kingdom, to moral duties, or to man's heavenly destiny (cf. *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 10). We must be careful not to confuse the allegorical typical sense with allegory, which is one of the forms of the improper literal sense.

[3] Though the " type " is first a reality raised up by God antecedently to its introduction into Scripture (hence it is the object of the " dramatic " inspiration of the Bible and entails a " biblical, " though not " scriptural, "

4) *Consequent and Accommodated Senses.*

We cannot say the same for the consequent and accommodated senses. These are the names given to new applications which may be derived from the sacred text, whether by way of a logical deduction employing a minor premise drawn from reason *(consequent sense)*, or by adaptation to some new situation or doctrine, based on some more or less close similarity *(accommodated sense)*. There is no doubt but that the biblical text, because of its outstanding richness, invites such applications. And it is an established fact that, with the progressive development of science, philosophy, and culture, men have always been anxious by such appeals to bolster their opinions with the great weight of the Bible's authority. But are these appeals always legitimate, and can such deduced or transposed senses be considered genuinely "scriptural," approved and willed by the Holy Spirit? This is another matter.

Undoubtedly the Holy Spirit again surpasses his instrument in that he has foreseen even all the possible interpretations which his words would receive from readers through the centuries. But this does not mean that he has approved them. For he has likewise foreseen the heretical interpretations. In order to be able to say that these deduced or adapted meanings were permitted or willed by God, we must at least be able to prove that they contain no error and do no violence to the literal meaning of the text. These are the two conditions laid down by St. Augustine (*Confess.* XII, 23 ff.), and repeated by St. Thomas (*De Pot.* q. 4, a. 1). And even if these conditions are realized, the most one can say is that these senses were willed indirectly by God with the sacred text as an *occasion*, but not that they are taught directly *by means of* this text. For they do not derive immediately from Scripture, even taken as a whole, but require some intervention of the human mind. Hence they are not "scriptural" senses, except in a wide and improper sense.[1]

sense), only when it is brought into Scripture does the "type" enter the economy of Revelation (it is even possible that a "type" get its existence only from Scripture, v.g., the lack of parents in the case of Melchizedek [Heb 7: 3]); thus it becomes properly "scriptural" and may be in some way classified, alongside the fuller sense, under the literal sense. See A. Fernandez, "Sentido plenior, literal, típico, espiritual," *Biblica* 34 (1953) 299-326, esp. 308-14 and 326.

[1] If we were to admit, with St. Augustine (*Confess.* XI, 31), that the inspired author could have known by special revelation all those interpretations which

5) *The Value and Use of the Different Senses.*

It follows from all that has been said about these different senses which can be drawn from Scripture that they differ greatly from one another as regards authority and that, in order for them to be used legitimately, certain conditions and restrictions must be observed:

a) First of all, they must be connected with the primary sense and be only a development of it. We have said that new, entirely disparate senses would cause such harmful confusion that they could not be willed by God. St. Thomas clearly affirms this dependence of the spiritual typical sense: *qui super litteralem fundatur et eum supponit* (I, q. 1, a. 10; cf. *Quodl. VII*, a. 14, ad 1m); and the same is true by definition of the other derived senses, which only broaden the primary meaning of the text.

b) Secondly, these spiritual or secondary senses derive all their force from their connection with the primary sense. They are certain and useful if they flow immediately from it, but they become doubtful and worthless — sometimes even dangerous — if their connection with the primary sense is remote and arbitrary.

The typical sense is particularly difficult to determine. Only God knows what realities he has destined to be the " types " of things to come and it is not up to the readers of the Bible to decide this matter on their own initiative. Such a sense must not be considered certain unless it has been affirmed in Scripture by Christ or the

would be given to his statements, and that he chose his words accordingly, we should have to grant those interpretations the value of properly scriptural senses, and even in some way that of literal senses, at least by a derivative and extended title. But this opinion did not win general acceptance in the Christian tradition. Even in St. Augustine, it is but a momentary sally of his genius which finds few parallels in the rest of his works (see also a less categorical allusion in the *De doctrina christiana* III, 27: *forsitan vidit*).

Though St. Thomas takes up this opinion (*De Pot.*, q. 4, a. 1), he does so in order to give a respectful exposition of the thought of the great doctor; moreover, he speaks with notable reserve (*non est incredibile . . .*, as contrasted with the *sensit ille omnino* of St. Augustine). Besides, in the *Summa* (I, q. 1, a. 10 c *fin.*), which is in other respects a summary of the thought of the *De Pot.*, he makes no mention of this opinion and, contrary to the contention of Synave (*art. cit.*, p. 59), omits all consideration of the spiritual senses. Cf. Blanche, *art. cit.*, pp. 202, 205 ff.

Apostles, or has been taught by the constant tradition of the Church.

c) Furthermore, these different senses, taken by themselves, never have strictly probative force in matters of faith. This authority belongs only to the primary sense: *ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum* (I, q. 1, a. 10; cf. *Quodl. VII*, a. 14, ad 4m). It is impossible for a truth of faith to rest *only* on a spiritual or derived sense. The spiritual sense contains "nothing necessary to faith which Scripture does not clearly teach elsewhere by means of its literal sense" (I, *loc. cit.* ad 1m; *Quodl., loc. cit.* ad 3m). The same is true of the "fuller" sense which, by definition results from the use of the primary sense of other passages of the Old or New Testament. As for the "consequent" and "accommodated" senses, the fact that they involve the intervention of human reasoning makes them at best legitimate theological conclusions, but not major premises of faith.

d) Finally, it is evident that we must employ great flexibility in making these different classifications. Here again we must insist on the analogical nature of this matter. The effects of inspiration are diffused throughout the different senses of the text in a gradually decreasing progression which cannot be divided into clear-out stages. When and to what extent is the exegete allowing his own reasoning to enter into his interpretation of Scripture? This is not an easy matter to determine. A "fuller" sense can easily become a "consequent" sense, or even slip into a mere "accommodated" sense. These shades of difference must be evaluated in each case in order to determine to what extent the sense is "scriptural" or not even scriptural at all.

It must never be forgotten that God has seen fit to make use of a human intermediary in order to speak to us. Consequently, the surest way of discovering the divine thought is first to discover the thought of his interpreter, that is, the primary sense, "ceteris excelsior," as St. Augustine says (*Confess.*, XII, 32), or the "sensus principalis," as St. Thomas calls it (*In IV Sent.*, d. 21, q. 1, a. 2, qa. 1, ad 3m). Everything else is derived from that.

6) *Ecclesiastical Directives.*

Modern exegesis has devoted more and more attention to positive investigation into the primary literal sense, and in this it has been

encouraged by official directives of the Church. *Divino afflante Spiritu* specially emphasized this point. [1]

The Encyclical forcefully recalls the primacy of the literal sense; exegetes are urged to use all the resources of modern methods in order to discover before all else the literal meaning of the sacred text. Of course, the value of the spiritual or mystical sense is recognized, but with wise reservations: besides the fact that it is based on the literal sense, it is very difficult to deal with and cannot be affirmed with certainty unless it is explicity indicated in the New Testament, or taught by the Church herself in her tradition or her liturgy. As for the adapted or "accommodated" sense, it may sometimes be useful for the spiritual life or for preaching, but it still remains secondary, "extrinsic and accidental" *(externum et adjectum)* to Holy Scripture, and may easily become dangerous or ridiculous. Whatever some may think, adds the Encyclical, the literal sense correctly understood remains the best and surest source of nourishment for the soul.

In view of all that we have said of inspiration how could it be otherwise? It is the sense which God directly willed and caused to be written. By penetrating the thought of the man inspired by God we are sure of walking hand in hand with God. If we pay no attention to this human guide and try to discover the thoughts of the divine Spirit by ourselves, we run the risk of finding only the inventions of our own mind.

C) Historical Criticism.

If the Bible contained only unverifiable mysteries, its meaning, once determined, would offer no further difficulty to the assent of the believing mind. But it also treats of human realities, of scientific and historical matters, and is thereby susceptible of empirical verification. This test gives rise to grave problems. If the truth of the Bible taken as a whole emerges victorious from this comparison with human sources of information, we must still admit that there remain some particular cases which appear difficult to reconcile. The critical mind thinks it sees discrepancies and even contradictions between the Bible and what it knows from profane sources, and even

[1] *AAS* 35 (1943) 310 ff.; *EB* [550-53].

between different passages of the sacred book itself. And scriptural inerrancy is apparently called into question.

One solution which is often useful is to explain these paradoxes by means of *corruptions* which have crept into the original text. This solution is especially valuable in certain cases, for example, in the matter of numbers and proper names. It is by no means sufficient, however, for many other less superficial problems. Hence several other solutions have been tried in the endeavor to answer these difficulties.

We have already outlined the theoretical principles which must guide us in solving the problem of inerrancy. Here we wish to speak only of the practical solutions which have been proposed, in order to evaluate them in the light of these principles and to come to a better understanding of the Church's decisions in rejecting some and approving others.

1) The restriction of inerrancy, or even of inspiration, to matters of "faith and morals" was one of the first attempts—actually a very radical one — to suppress all possibility of conflict. Any defense of the truth of the holy books in profane matters was thus abandoned. We have already shown (pp. 127 f., 137) why such a surrender of a considerable portion of the Bible is unacceptable. There is no need, therefore, of returning to the point.

Another, more subtle expedient gave good promise of exempting from the divine guarantee many passages of Scripture whose truth seemed difficult to defend. It consisted in acknowledging the existence of "implicit citations." An author does not commit himself when he quotes, as he does when he speaks for himself. All will agree that this is true of explicit citations, in which the author lets it be known that he is quoting the words of another. Why not grant the existence of cases in which the author does the very same thing — without informing us, he would introduce into his text passages borrowed from other sources? These passages might then contain real errors and yet cause no difficulty at all: they are not the work of the inspired author; they are not even approved by him. And thus inerrancy is saved.

This solution is based on a valid principle, but simplifies it to the point of falsifying it; and the practical application which it proposes is obviously unjustified:

a) It is possible for an author not to vouch for citations which he makes, but it is also possible for him to approve them (cf. p. 138, note 3). The latter is even more frequently the case, especially if, according to the supposition, he cites them without informing his reader. Is it not true that this way of acting, which was undoubtedly in more common use among ancient peoples than among us, is itself a sufficient sign that the author approves and makes his own passages which have been thus incorporated into his text? It is difficult to see how he could avoid assuming responsibility for a thought which he appropriates to the extent of obliterating its origin.

b) Moreover, how are we to know when we are in the presence of an "implicit citation"? Such passages are, by definition, very difficult to identify, especially since we are dealing with ancient times, and most of the documents have been lost. It is easy to see, therefore, how this solution leaves the door wide open to a dangerously arbitrary procedure. It becomes too easy to dispose of any embarrassing text by attributing its falsity, without any other proof, to some anonymous source which God has not guaranteed.

The Biblical Commission, therefore, in a special decree (*DB* 1979; *EB* 153 [160]), condemned the systematic use of this expedient, while, however, recognizing its validity in some cases where certain precise conditions are verified, viz. when it is solidly proved that: (i) the author is citing, and (ii) he does not lend his approval.

2) The system which we have just examined sought to save the truth of the inspired author's judgment by considering it under the aspect of the internal assent which is given (cf. *supra*, pp. 134 f., 137 ff.). The system of "*historical appearances*" approaches the judgment rather from the point of view of its formal object (cf. *supra*, pp. 134, 137).

This system took its origin from an unjustified interpretation of *Providentissimus*. Leo XIII had explained that the sacred writers did not err when they spoke of natural phenomena according to their "sensible appearances" (*ea quae sensibiliter apparent*, cited from St. Thomas, I, q. 70, a. 1, ad 3m), and he advised that principles analogous to those which he had developed concerning science should be applied to allied disciplines, notably to history (*DB* 1949; *EB* 108 [123]). Some went about this transposition in too literal a fashion.

They thought they could say that the sacred writers had recounted historical facts only according to their "appearances," that is to say, according to the manner in which they were spoken of by ordinary, poorly informed people, and not according to their authentic reality as guaranteed by good sources. Benedict XV, in *Spiritus Paraclitus*, emphatically condemned this unjustified interpretation of his predecessor's words (*DB* 2187; *EB* 469 [456] f.).

As a matter of fact, these two disciplines, natural science and history, are related to the message of Scripture in entirely different ways. Their formal objects, indeed, are essentially of the same order: to discover and explain the essence of the facts, whether natural or historical, on the basis of their external appearance. But these facts most certainly do not have the same importance in relation to the end which the inspired author has in view. The writer, and above him the Holy Spirit who is directing him, had no intention of giving men information concerning the inner reality of natural objects; that has no bearing on salvation.[1] On the other hand, the reality of historical facts has an immediate bearing on the message of Revelation since, in the divine economy, the work of salvation has been inserted into the framework of human history. This is why the inspired author may, under the divine influence, have to exercise great care and completely vouch for the truth of his statement in such a historical affirmation, whereas he can speak of an astronomical phenomenon in ordinary, everyday language, without verifying or even calling into question the common opinion. His formal object is entirely different in each case. In one, he remains on the surface of things; in the other, he inquires into their essence. It is this concrete formal object of the writer which determines the interpretation of his judgment and the evaluation of its truth.

And yet, even if history plays an entirely different role in the sacred book than do the natural sciences, this does not mean that the sacred authors always used history as a strict scientific discipline. Their attitude toward it varies, and their formal object lays stress upon different aspects of the events — more or less profound, more

[1] "Spiritum Dei . . . noluisse ista [viz., intimam adspectabilium rerum constitutionem] docere homines, nulla saluti profutura" (*Providentissimus*, quoting St. Augustine; *DB* 1947; *EB* 106 [121]).

or less superficial — according to the different relations of these events to the concrete message which they intend to transmit. There are various ways of writing history; this brings us to the question of literary types.

3) By "*literary type*" is meant a certain way of presenting a thought in a literary dress which comprises both the form and the content. The form is characterized by the use of a certain vocabulary or a certain style: the medium of expression is either prose or verse; the language employed is either direct or figurative; in the latter case, many varieties are possible: parable, allegory, fable, etc. It is immediately evident that the choice of form itself affects the content, which is so intimately related to it. But the content is even more directly affected by the writer's intention, because of which he will prefer one type rather than another, depending upon the end he has in view. According as he wishes to instruct, convince, or entertain, his exposition will be didactic, apologetic, or a romantic fiction. One type will be aimed at the intellect, another will move the heart, and still another will appeal to the imagination.

Again we return to what has been outlined above concerning the influence of the practical judgment on the composition of a literary work. The choice of the "literary type" is, in short, nothing more than the concrete application of the principles already analyzed. The great importance of this choice is that it explains the author's judgment, not merely under one or other particular aspect, but under every aspect. The fact that an author chooses one literary type rather than another dominates his work and reveals to us: (a) the formal aspect which he is considering in his subject matter; (b) the extent to which he assents to what he enunciates; and (c) whether or not he intends to propose his thought to us as genuine teaching. The literary type of a work is, then, like the key-signature which gives us its pitch and enables us to understand it.[1]

[1] In the present systematic exposition, we speak as though each work had but one literary type which dominated it as a whole. But it is self-evident that the author can in fact change types in the course of his book. A musical composer changes his key and makes modulations at will. A writer, then, has the same liberty to vary his mode of expression. The reader, in his analysis, must take account of these variations and evaluate each passage in the light of its own literary genre.

This is why, ever since biblical scholars recognized the fundamental importance of the human authors of the Bible and of their concrete thought processes, they have been aware of the need fully to understand the authors' literary types in order correctly to grasp their thoughts and intentions. [1]

As for the existence of literary types in the Bible, the fact is so evident and so universally recognized that it is beyond question. It is treated here simply because of the delicate problem of determining whether *even in historical narrative* we may acknowledge literary types which would modify the presentation of the facts.

The actual existence of different historical types is not questioned. It seems likely a priori that they should exist, and experience leaves no room for doubt on the subject. In the literature of every country and of every age, we meet with works of scientific history, apologetic history, romantic history, or historical romance. [2] The erudite treatise, which inquires into the truth of the slightest details, is one thing; the text-book or synthetic survey, which keeps only the broad lines and passes over the details, is quite another. Accordingly the objective truth of the events is minutely investigated, or treated with a certain amount of liberty, or even mingled with a greater or less amount of fiction.

Do we find these different historical types in the Bible? This is precisely the point which has given rise to so many disputes. Some have a priori denied the possibility; their reason is that, however slight the liberties or fictitious elements in these types may be, they are "unworthy" of God's truth. Others have answered that it is not for us to decide which modes of expression are suitable for God; we should rather examine that book which is a concrete reflection of God's intentions, viz. the Bible.

[1] This practice is not novel. Some of the Fathers were already very much aware of this question; are the "modes" of which St. Thomas speaks anything else than our "literary types"? "Modus seu forma in sacra Scriptura multiplex invenitur. Narrativus . . . et hoc in historialibus libris invenitur. Admonitorius et exhortatorius et praeceptivus . . . Hic modus invenitur in lege, prophetis et libris Salomonis. Disputativus: et hoc in Job et in Apostolo . . . Deprecativus vel laudativus: et hoc invenitur in isto libro (*sc.*, Psalmorum)," *In Psalm.*, Prooemium (ed. Vivès, XVIII, 228).

[2] The difference between these last two types is easy to see. Romantic history describes historical events in a free and somewhat fanciful form; a historical romance presents imaginary events in the form of a true history.

We think that this latter attitude is the better one. It is not evident why divine inspiration should, as a matter of principle, forbid the sacred writers to make use of literary types which their contemporaries used without in any way deceiving their readers.[1] For no one was misled by these "fictitious" literary types in the ancient Orient, where the concept of history was so different from ours. The tenor of the book itself and, above all, the literary usages of the age sufficiently apprized the public of the author's real intentions. Therefore God did not deceive anyone if he had his interpreter speak through the medium of fiction or by means of an approximation.[2]

It may be that Westerners of the twentieth century who have been brought up on Aristotelian logic and schooled in the most rigorous techniques of historical research will have some difficulty in recapturing the somewhat crude simplicity of ancient times. But it is up to them to make the effort and to adapt themselves. For God has chosen to speak to them, not directly and in their own language, but through the intermediary and according to the practices of ancient Orientals.[3]

It will be the task of the exegete to rediscover and to understand these literary usages of the ancient East. He will have to be on his guard against any system which works a priori,[4] against any artificial

[1] There is, however, one type which must be a priori excluded from the Bible as unworthy of God, i.e., any kind of "myth" which would introduce error or fiction into the very essence of religious speculations about the Deity. Cf. Syllabus, prop. 7 (*DB* 1707; *EB* 60 [75]); Conc. Vatican., can. 4 de Fide (*DB* 1813; *EB* 65 [80]; *Providentissimus* (*EB* 85 [100]); Comm. Bibl., Decree of June 30, 1909, dub. II (*DB* 2122; *EB* 333 [337]). See Lagrange, *Méthode historique*, pp. 139, 201 ff.

[2] In answer to the false notion that the ancient Orientals were naive and lacking in critical sense, see Lagrange in *Revue Biblique*, New Series 2 (1905) 621 ff.

[3] In *Initiation Biblique* (3rd ed.; 1954), pp. 42-43, I have given a brief explanation of the attitudes which set off the Semitic authors of the Bible from our Greco-Roman modes of thought and communication, and their religious spirit from our lay spirit; these attitudes entail different ways of discovering and expressing the truth. In forthcoming publications I plan to treat this extremely important topic at greater length.

[4] We should not postulate the existence of certain literary types in the ancient East simply on the evidence found in Holy Scripture and in order to vindicate it. See Bea, *op. cit.*, p. 104. Fr. Lagrange (*art. cit.*, p. 622) had already written: "The distinction of literary types should be maintained only if determined according to sound methods, and not according to the exigencies of a particular case, as a means of avoiding objections."

classification.[1] In this matter, objective reality must always be the deciding factor. But if he then believes that in the sacred books, as in the literature of the period, he has found certain historical types which are rather free in dealing with facts or somewhat interspersed with fiction, he will bow to the facts and will not be afraid to allow that God may have thought fit to make use of such types without compromising his Truth.

4) The exegete can, moreover, take heart from the official encouragement of the Church. It is her prerogative, rather than that of the private theologian, to declare what literary types are worthy or unworthy of God. *Divino afflante Spiritu* has seen fit to treat this subject at some length and to make an explicit recommendation of the method of literary types.[2] After having exhorted exegetes to study the "literary types" of the ancient East, making use of the marvelous discoveries of our day, the Encyclical adds:

> Nevertheless no one, who has a correct idea of biblical inspiration, will be surprised to find, even in the Sacred Writers, as in other ancient authors, certain fixed ways of expounding and narrating, certain definite idioms, especially of a kind peculiar to the Semitic tongues, so-called approximations, and certain hyperbolical modes of expression, nay, at times, even paradoxical, which even help to impress the ideas more deeply on the mind. For of the modes of expression which, among ancient peoples, and especially those of the East, human language used to express its thought, none is excluded from the Sacred Books, provided the way of speaking adopted in no wise contradicts the holiness and truth of God, as, with his customary wisdom, the Angelic Doctor already observed in these words: "In Scripture divine things are presented to us in the manner which is in common use amongst men." ...Not

[1] Such, e.g., as that of Fr. Hummelauer; cf. Bea, *op. cit.*, p. 102 ff. Fr. Lagrange *(Méthode historique)* gives some more careful observations on this whole question.

[2] *Providentissimus* made no mention of this question, which had not yet arisen at the time. In 1905 and 1909, the Biblical Commission (*DB* 1980 and 2122; *EB* 154 [161] and 333 [337]) showed itself rather unwilling as a matter of principle to admit in the Bible the presence of more or less fictional historical types. However, it couched its replies in cautious terms which left the road open for the research of prudent and conscientious exegetes. In 1920, *Spiritus Paraclitus* (*DB* 2188; *EB* 474 [461]) made an unfavorable but cursory reference to this method.

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infrequently... when some persons reproachfully charge the Sacred Writers with some historical error or inaccuracy in the recording of facts, on closer examination it turns out to be nothing else than those customary modes of expression and narration peculiar to the ancients, which used to be employed in the mutual dealings of social life and which in fact were sanctioned by common usage.[1]

Thus the official Magisterium of the Church approves the principle of this method, which follows necessarily from a sound theory of inspiration and inerrancy. As for the detailed application of the principle, it mentions explicitly, among other things, the approximations, hyperboles, and paradoxes which were in current use among the ancient Semites. Now these figures of speech are not necessarily limited to particular expressions, but may affect the tone of an entire book and may result in free or partly fictitious types of historical narrative.[2] As a matter of fact, the Encyclical does not explicitly mention these last forms, but we may believe that it does not exclude them. It undoubtedly leaves to the exegete the task of further discussion on these delicate problems which are not yet sufficiently resolved, and refrains from definitively deciding whether the types postulated by scientific inquiry in any way " contradict the holiness and truth of God. "

D) Rational Exegesis and the Rule of Faith.

Now the Church always retains the supreme right to direct and control exegesis. This is the last conclusion which we wish to deduce from the concept of inspiration.

Because two authors, God and man, concurred in the production of the Scriptures, they must be explored by a twofold method, *sc.*, faith and reason. Just as there exists a perfect harmony between God, the principal cause, and man, his instrument who is totally subordinated to him, so too there can be no conflict between the interpretation postulated by reason and that demanded by faith.

[1] After the translation given in *RSS*, nos. 36-38; cf. *EB* [559-60].

[2] See Chr. Pesch, S.J., *De inspiratione Sacrae Scripturae* (Fribourg, 1906), p. 503: " Quia parabola potest esse historia ficta, patet *etiam fictas narrationes posse inspirari*. Si hoc valet de brevioribus narrationibus, potest etiam valere de longioribus.... Brevitas vel longitudo non videtur ratione inspirationis constituere essentialem differentiam. "

And, on the other hand, just as the divine Cause, in the very act of moving the human mind, allows it to retain its autonomy and spontaneity as a free and intelligent cause, so too the rule of faith, while directing work of exegesis from above, does not thereby impede it in the free use of its proper methods.

These are the principles which must direct the practical activity of exegesis and preserve it in a golden mean between two opposite extremes.

1) One error would, in effect, consist in wishing to free scientific exegesis from all *control on the part of faith and the Church.* This is the error which inspires the attitude of Protestant exegetes and particularly of modern Rationalists, the so-called "independent" critics. It is also the basis of that oft-repeated complaint that Catholic exegesis is bound by irrational "prejudices" which prevent it from being scientific.

Such an attitude is unacceptable from the point of view of Catholic faith, because it either refuses to recognize the existence and the role of the Church as a Magisterium instituted by God (the Protestant exegetes), or even denies the divine origin of Scripture, the existence of supernatural inspiration, and, in general, the whole supernatural order, including God himself who is relegated to the status of an immanent Idea in the world (Rationalists).

It is the task of other disciplines to refute these errors. Once one admits the existence of supernatural revelation and the divine mission of the Church, it necessarily follows that the Church must control the interpretation and use of Scripture. Actually, in order to have a genuine understanding of this divinely inspired book, the exegete must penetrate the thoughts of the human author and thereby discover the very intentions of God himself, which he cannot know apart from the complete context of Revelation, according to the "analogy of faith." Now God has confided the deposit of faith — and Scripture in particular [1] — to the Church alone. For Scripture is but one of the expressions of this deposit, one which is, moreover, incomplete and insufficient of itself. It is the exclusive prerogative of the Church to give an authentic interpretation of Scripture, in

1 See *Providentissimus* (*EB* 93 ff. [108 ff.]); Litt. Apost. *Vigilantiae* (*EB* 134 [141]).

conformity with its living Tradition. The private exegete is, therefore, incapable of discovering the true and divinely intended meaning of Scripture if he restricts his study to Scripture alone (Protestant exegesis), and above all if he is willing to follow only his reason (Rationalist criticism). A genuine penetration of Scripture will demand that he read it with the light of faith and draw his inspiration from the judgment of the Church, studying the spirit of her Tradition, following the interpretations of the Fathers, especially when these unanimously agree, [1] and, lastly, remaining subject to the decisions of the official Magisterium. [2]

In so doing he in no way impedes his scientific research nor does he impair his use of critical methods, for that is a different sphere of activity which retains its own internal autonomy. We shall see this when we speak of the opposite error.

2) The contrary error would be to refuse the exegete freedom in his *rational work* under the pretext that the book which he is studying has a divine origin and belongs to the Church alone. Such an attitude overlooks the role of the human author, just as the preceding error overlooked that of the divine Author.

In order to penetrate the thought of the writer whom God willed to use, we must place ourselves on the level of a man speaking to other men, in a particular time and under concrete circumstances. This is the task of textual, literary, and historical criticism, as we have described it above. Each of these disciplines has its proper method which pertains to reason and concerning which faith has nothing, at least directly, to say. If we scorn these rational procedures

[1] See *Providentissimus* (*DB* 1944; *EB* 95 ff. [110 ff.]).

[2] In this connection we may even speak of a type of "inspiration" of the Church and in the Church; it would not, of course, be the same as biblical inspiration, but analogous to it because of the positive illuminating motion which it entails; in order to distinguish it from biblical inspiration, it could well be called "ecclesiastical inspiration." This terminology, which appears contrary to present theological usage, actually is in harmony with a well accepted doctrine of the patristic and medieval periods. It is based on the theological principle that the same Spirit who had the books written is necessary for an authoritative interpretation of them. See M. Labourdette in *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950) 406-407; G. Bardy, "L'Inspiration des Pères de l'Eglise," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 40 (1951-1952) 7-26; P. Benoit in *Sacra Pagina* I, 86-99.

and claim to do without them, we are belittling the human means which God has adopted in order to speak to us and we expose ourselves to the danger of interpreting God's Scripture in a recklessly arbitrary fashion.

Furthermore, it would be wrong to be afraid of such scientific exegesis. "Rational" does not mean "rationalistic." In the very name of reason and impartial science this exegesis strives to penetrate the thought of the author as it was in reality and, for that very reason, does not allow itself a priori to exclude the supernatural. On the contrary, it is ready to admit the influence of the supernatural upon thoughts and deeds, provided its faithful investigation obliges it to recognize the reality of doctrines or events which transcend unaided reason.

All thinking, especially all religious thinking, implies certain philosophical and theological principles. One cannot study the content of a religious book such as the Bible without adopting certain philosophical and theological positions. This is so true that the self-styled "independent" exegesis also presupposes some such principles, which are no less "biased" than those of which Catholic exegesis is accused. But they suffer from the great defect of being purely rational prejudices, and hence entirely out of keeping with a book whose content is essentially supernatural. The principles of faith, on the other hand, are quite well suited to Scripture, since they derive from it and, in general, from divine revelation.

It will be neither possible nor licit for the Catholic exegete to forget these principles as he goes about his study. But the light of faith will in no way jeopardize the properly scientific worth of his exegesis. For it will respect the autonomy of his methods and will exercise only an indirect control over them, by testing the results of his labor. The Catholic exegete will be entirely free to establish his philological, archaeological, historical, etc., conclusions as scientifically as possible. Only when these are contrary to faith, will faith have the right to tell him that he has made a mistake, and that he must revise his work. For there can be no contradiction between faith and reason.

3) The "rule of faith," and the decisions of the Church which are its expression, are, therefore, a norm extrinsic to scientific exegesis,

necessary to guide its progress from above, but which in no way interferes with the free exercise of its proper methods of procedure. We might emphasize the discretion which the Church exercises in this matter by making some distinctions which are too often overlooked:

a) The Church ordinarily sets forth definitive interpretations only in what concerns "matters of faith and morals."[1] As for the rest of "the vast material contained in the sacred books," it can certainly decide in the same way. Actually there are "but few texts the sense of which has been defined by the authority of the Church."[2]

b) Only those interpretations which are taught by the solemn definitions of the Councils or of the Sovereign Pontiffs bind the exegete in faith. The Decisions of the Sacred Congregations, and in particular those of the Biblical Commission which is similar to these Congregations, do not have the same force; they impose a strict obligation on the exegete only with regard to the social expression of his opinions. Of course, they also call for his sincere respect and even his interior assent, but this can be suspended for serious reasons, for such decisions are neither infallible nor irrevocable.[3]

c) As for the "unanimous agreement" of the Fathers, this constitutes a certain argument only in matters of faith and morals, and there are admittedly very few texts of Scripture for which it is established.[4]

[1] "In rebus fidei vel morum, ad aedificationem doctrinae christianae pertinentium, is pro vero sensu Sacrae Scripturae habendus [est], quem tenuit ac tenet sancta mater Ecclesia, cuius est iudicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Scripturarum Sanctarum" (*DB* 1788; *EB* 63 [78], repeating a decree of the Council of Trent, *DB* 786, *EB* 47 [62]). On this question see Lagrange in *Revue Biblique* 9 (1900) 135 ff.; *id.*, New Series 2 (1905) 399 ff.

[2] *Divino afflante Spiritu*, in *RSS* no. 47; cf. *EB* [565].

[3] See A. Fernandez in *Institutiones Biblicae*, I, 399 ff.; J. Dupont, "A propos du nouvel Enchiridion Biblicum," *Revue Biblique* 62 (1955) 414-19; E. F. Siegman, "The Decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, A Recent Clarification," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 18 (1956) 23-29.

[4] "There are but few texts whose sense has been defined by the authority of the Church; nor are those more numerous about which the teaching of the Holy Fathers is unanimous" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*, in *RSS* no. 47; cf. *EB* [565]).

These restrictions obviously leave room for a great deal of freedom in the exercise of scientific exegesis. In *Divino afflante Spiritu*, Pope Pius XII has thought it wise to lay special emphasis on this point and to encourage exegetes to labor zealously and courageously according to the approved scientific methods of the most modern criticism. He has likewise instructed the other children of the Church to respect and esteem this very necessary research in a spirit of justice and charity.

An exegete who rejects the divine Author and the means necessary to approach him, — Faith and the Church, — condemns himself to remain on the outer surface of the sacred book, and even to do violence to its meaning. One who neglects the human author and the rational methods of procedure which are necessary to understand him, also exposes himself to the danger of remaining on the outside of Scripture by introducing subtle and arbitrary interpretations which were not willed by God. The exegete who takes both authors into account and maintains an exact hierarchy between the directives of faith and the demands of reason is able to penetrate Scripture in a harmonious and truly comprehensive fashion. On the solid foundation of a *scientific and critical exegesis*, which takes into consideration every human quality of the book, he will be able to erect a *theological and spiritual exegesis* which will disclose the intentions and teachings of God with the firmest guarantees. He will achieve this rich and fruitful result, which should be the end of all his work,[1] if he always keeps before his eyes the true nature of the charism of inspiration as found in the doctrine of St. Thomas and as taught by the Church in her official approbation of this doctrine.

[1] *Divino afflante Spiritu* deplores the fact that some Catholic commentaries restrict themselves to explaining the sacred text from the point of view of history, archaeology, philology, etc., and do not go on to set forth its theological teaching (see in *RSS* no. 24; cf. *EB* [551]). This second step is undoubtedly the more important, and, indeed, constitutes the true purpose of exegesis. Rational criticism should not be cultivated except as an auxiliary and preparatory discipline, as a means of discovering the doctrinal content.

APPENDIX

Names of the Charismatic Gifts (Cf. Explanatory Note 2)

Greek (Merk ed.)	*Vulgate* (Merk ed.)	*Douay-Rheims* (Challoner rev.)	*Westminster*	*Chicago* (Goodspeed tr.)
λόγος σοφίας	sermo sapientiae	the word of wisdom	utterance of wisdom	the power to speak wisely
λόγος γνώσεως	sermo scientiae	the word of knowledge	utterance of knowledge	the power to express knowledge
πίστις	fides	faith	faith	faith
χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων	gratia sanitatum	the grace of healing	gifts of healings	the ability to cure the sick
ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων	operatio virtutum	the working of miracles	workings of miracles	the working of miracles
προφητεία	prophetia	prophecy	prophecy	inspiration in preaching
διακρίσεις πνευμάτων	discretio spirituum	the discerning of spirits	discernings of spirits	the power of distinguishing the true Spirit from false ones
γένη γλωσσῶν	genera linguarum	diverse kinds of tongues	divers kinds of 'tongues'	various ecstatic utterances
ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν	interpretatio sermonum	interpretation of speeches	the interpretation of 'tongues'	the ability to explain [ecstatic utterances]

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ANALYTICAL INDEX

N. B. The references given below are principally to the *Summa Theologica* II-II. *EN* refers to the Explanatory Notes (Part I); page nos. refer to the pages of Part II.

ANGELS:

The communication of prophetic revelation to men is part of their proper work, q. 172, a. 2; *EN* 21.
They themselves cannot be called prophets since they contemplate the mystery of the divine essence as beings fully united to God, q. 174, a. 5, ad 2.

AUTHOR OF HOLY SCRIPTURE:

God is the principal Author of Holy Scripture, but man, in a subordinate capacity, is also a true author, pp. 98-100.
Since the notion of author is a human one, it can be applied to God only by analogy, pp. 100-103.
A single inspired book may have had several human authors, each of whom participated in the charism of inspiration, pp. 123-27.

AWARENESS AND UNAWARENESS:

The prophet may be unaware that God is inspiring him; in this case his knowledge is less certain and his charism less perfect, q. 171, a. 5; q. 173, a. 4; pp. 72-74.

BALAAM:

Even though he was the demons' prophet, he spoke under divine inspiration, q. 172, a. 6, ad 1.

BLESSED, THE:

See the divine essence without transport, q. 175, a. 4, ad 1.
Cannot be called prophets, q. 174, a. 5.
In his rapture, Paul became "blessed" only in a relative and transitory manner, q. 175, a. 3, ad 3; a. 6, ad 3.

CAIPHAS:

Was moved by the Holy Spirit to say certain things, but did not receive the light to understand them, q. 173, a. 4.

CANONICITY:

The criterion of the scriptural inspiration of the Sacred Books, pp. 86-88.

CHRIST:

Saw the divine essence without transport, q. 175, a. 4, ad 2.
Can be called a prophet only in a relative sense, q. 174, a. 5, ad 3; *EN* 51.
Had the gift of tongues, but did not have to use it, q. 176, a. 1, ad 3.

CITATIONS IN SCRIPTURE:

Are guaranteed by inspiration and inerrancy only to the extent that the sacred writer approves their content, p. 138, note 3.
Recourse to "implicit citations" cannot be erected into a system, pp. 156-57.

DAVID:

Since he was endowed with intellectual vision, like Moses, his penetration of the mystery of Christ was better, but Moses better understood the mystery of the divinity, q. 174, a. 4, ad 1.
Was himself enraptured by intellectual visions, q. 175, a. 3, ad 1.

DEMONS:

Can reveal to a man truths which surpass his understanding, but this is not prophecy properly so called, q. 172, a. 5.
Their revelations can contain truth, owing to the divine concurrence, and with God's permission, q. 172, a. 6.
Can work false miracles, q. 178, a. 1, ad 2; a. 2.

DISPOSITIONS, REQUISITE:

Prophecy supposes certain natural dispositions in the subject, but, if these are lacking, God can give them at the same time that He gives the charism, q. 172, a. 3.
Sanctifying grace is not necessarily required in the prophet, but a certain freedom from passion and wordly occupations is necessary, q. 172, a. 4.

DREAMS:

Sleep gives the soul a greater receptivity, but weakens its power of judgment, q. 172, a. 1, ad 2.
Visions in a waking state constitute a more elevated degree of prophecy than do dreams, q. 174, a. 3.

ECSTASY:

Is merely a " going out of oneself, " as distinguished from rapture, which further implies the notion of violence done to the soul, q. 175, a. 2, ad 1.

EXEGESIS:

Has as its task to rediscover the thought of the inspired author in all its varying shades of meaning, and thereby to discover the the thought of God, pp. 164-65.
Agreement between its proper methods and the rule of faith, pp. 165-67.
Scientific and critical exegesis is to serve as a foundation for theological and spiritual exegesis, p. 168.

FACULTIES, EXECUTIVE:

Those of the sacred writer receive in an analogous way their share of the inspiration, pp. 121-23.

FAITH:

The Christian's faith is ultimately based upon the testimony of those who have seen by means of prophetic revelation, q. 171, a. 3, ad 2; *EN* 11; q. 171, a. 5.
Prophetic knowledge is superior to the knowledge of faith insofar as it enables the revealed truth to be seen with evidence, at least in its " quia est, " *EN* 7 and *EN* 15.
The prophet can retain a conditional faith with respect to the object of his vision, *EN* 61.
In his rapture, Paul could not have made an act of faith, q. 175, a. 3, ad 3.
Faith is confirmed by miracles and, in addition, helps to produce them, q. 178, a. 1, ad 5.
God can use the dead faith of a sinner to produce a miracle, q. 178, a. 2, ad 2.

FUTURE EVENTS, KNOWLEDGE OF:

Natural knowledge of future events in their causes is not to be confused with prophecy in the proper sense, q. 172, a. 1.
Can be had even by animals, *ibid.*, ad 3.
Can be obtained through the superior understanding of the demons, q. 172, a. 5.

FUTURES, CONTINGENT:

Constitute the proper object of prophetic knowledge, q. 171, a. 3.
A prophecy concerning them is not to be judged false by the mere fact that what is foretold does not take place, q. 171, a. 6, ad 2; *EN* 18.

GLOSSOLALIA:

See: TONGUES, GIFT OF.

GRADES OF PROPHECY:

Are determined by the type of vision (sensible, imaginative, intellectual), by its object (action or knowledge), and by its circumstances, q. 174, a. 3.
Prophecy varies also according to the particular stage in the progress of divine revelation, q. 174, a. 6.
Prophecy by way of intellectual vision is essentially superior to prophecy by way of imaginative vision, q. 174, a. 2.
But the notion of prophecy is more properly realized in imaginative vision, q. 174, a. 2, ad 3; a. 3.
A single prophet can, at various times, enjoy different grades of prophecy, q. 174, a. 3, ad 2.

HABITUS:

The gift of prophecy is not a habitus, but a transitory impression, q. 171, a. 2.
The prophet's mind, however, retains a certain "habilitas," *ibid.*, ad 2.

HAGIOGRAPHER:

Makes supernatural judgments about things known naturally to him, and speaks "ex persona propria," whereas the prophet makes judgments about supernaturally known truths and speaks "ex persona Domini," q. 174, a. 2, ad 3.
The hagiographers can also make judgments about infused supernatural truths, *EN* 47; p. 108.

HEAVEN (THIRD):

Can be understood to mean the empyrean, an intellectual vision, the knowledge of God in himself, or the degree of knowledge possessed by the highest angels, q. 175, a. 3, ad 4.

HISTORICAL APPEARANCES:

An unjustified application to history of Leo XIII's statements concerning "scientific appearances," pp. 157-59.

IMPERFECTION OF PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE:

Prophecy is an imperfect species in the genus of divine revelation, whose perfection is in heaven, q. 171, a. 4, ad 2.
The prophet discovers only partial, limited truths, without possessing their principle, q. 171, a. 4; pp. 78-79.
He does not use his charism whenever he wishes, q. 171, a. 2; p. 78.
The perfection of prophecy varies according as the prophet is aware of the fact that he is inspired, q. 171, a. 5; pp. 72-73.
The prophet may lack full understanding of what he prophesies, q. 173, a. 4.

INERRANCY:

Prophetic knowledge, reflecting as it does the divine Truth, cannot be false, q. 171, a. 6.
Prophecy is not false merely because the events which it foretells do not take place, q. 171, a. 6, ad 2; *EN* 18.
Inerrancy is one of the results of inspiration, pp. 132-33.
Inerrancy is in question only when and to the extent that the formal judgment of the one inspired comes into play, pp. 133-42.
It must not be limited, as a matter of principle, to "res fidei et morum," pp. 137, 156.

INSPIRATION, COGNITIVE:

An elevation of the mind which prepares it for revelation, q. 171, a. 1, ad 4; *EN* 5.
In modern usage, which is not the terminology of St. Thomas, this term is reserved for the case of the supernatural light without infused representations, pp. 68-72.

INSPIRATION, SCRIPTURAL:

Is more than a "negative assistance" or a "subsequent approbation," pp. 88-89.
Involves a positive influence of the Holy Spirit on all the faculties of the sacred writer, pp. 90, 119-23.
Can be called "verbal," since it extends even to the words of the text, pp. 122-23.
Is distinguished from cognitive inspiration by the concrete end which it has in view and by the dominant role of the practical judgment, pp. 105-111.
Must not be confused with revelation, pp. 111-14.
Must not be reduced to a purely practical impulse, pp. 114-15.
Involves a positive illumination of the speculative judgment whenever there is question of the latter, pp. 115-17.

INSTRUMENT:

To the extent that he himself knows, the true prophet is an instrument of the Holy Spirit only in a broad and improper sense, pp. 79-81, 94-95.

The prophet is an instrument in the proper sense of the word with respect to the secondary meanings which are hidden from him, q. 173, a. 4; p. 83.
Another instrument in the proper sense is the inspired subject who receives infused representations without the light necessary to form judgments about them, pp. 81-82.
The thaumaturge is an instrumental cause of the miracles which he works, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1; a. 2, ad 2.

INTELLECT:

The primary sphere of action of cognitive inspiration, q. 171, a. 1; q. 172, a. 2, ad 1; a. 4; p. 62.

INTERPRETATION OF SPEECHES:

This charism can be related to prophecy and is superior to the gift of tongues, q. 176, a. 2, ad 4.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

Already belongs to the New Testament and surpasses Moses, the greatest prophet of the Old, q. 174, a. 4, ad 3.

JUDGMENT:

Formal element of prophetic, and even of all knowledge, q. 173, a. 2; p. 58.
Can have either infused or acquired representations as its material element, q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2, ad 3.
Although primarily speculative in the case of the prophet, it is primarily practical in that of the sacred writer, who is directed thereby in forming and utilizing his speculative judgments, pp. 103-109.
The formal judgment of the inspired writer, which is favored with inerrancy, must be considered according to its formal object, its degree of affirmation, and the writer's intention to instruct, pp. 136-42.

LIGHT, PROPHETIC:

The formal element of the prophetic charism, q. 171, a. 3, ad 3.
Suffices by itself, without the need of new representations, in order to have true prophecy, q. 173, a. 2; *EN* 35; pp. 64-68.

LITERARY TYPES:

Definition, p. 159.
There are different literary types, even in history, pp. 159-61.
The sacred writers could use the current literary types of their age; we must be familiar with these types if we are to make a fair evaluation of their thought, pp. 161-63.

MIRACLES, GIFT OF:

Normal accompaniment of prophecy, for the purpose of confirming it, q. 171, a. 1; q. 178, a. 1.
Ordinarily presupposes holiness in the thaumaturge, but it can be granted to the sinner who preaches the truth and invokes the name of Christ, q. 178, a. 2.
The thaumaturge is merely an instrument in the hands of God, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1; *EN* 79.
God alone can effect true miracles, q. 178, a. 2.
The demons can perpetrate false miracles, q. 178, a. 1, ad 2; a. 2.
Healing occupies a special place in the category of miracles, q. 178, a. 1, ad 4.

MIRROR OF ETERNITY:

Not the divine essence itself, but the likenesses which reveal to the prophet the truths contained in the divine intellect, q. 173, a. 1.

MORALITY OF THE PROPHET:

Prophecy can be had without holiness of life, and even without charity, but it requires a certain freedom from passion, q. 172, a. 4.

MOSES:

Was the greatest of the prophets, q. 174, a. 4.
Saw the divine essence while in a state of rapture, q. 174, a. 5, ad 1; q. 175, a. 3. This opinion, which St. Thomas adopted from St Augustine, seems to be abandoned today, *EN* 59.

OBJECT OF PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE:

Everything divine and human, but most especially things which are hidden from natural knowledge, and particularly the contingent futures, q. 171, a. 3.
Not only supernatural truths, but also natural ones, q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2, ad 3; a. 3.

PAUL (ST.):

Caught up to the third heaven, he saw the divine essence, q. 175, a. 3. This opinion, which St. Thomas adopted from St. Augustine, is no longer held today, *EN* 59.
In his rapture he was transported, but his soul was not completely separated from his body, even though he himself suspected that this had happened, according to the opinion of St. Augustine, q. 175, a. 4, 5, and 6; *EN* 69.
Was favored, along with the other Apostles, with the gift of tongues, q. 176, a. 1, ad 1.

PETER (ST.):

Was carried out of himself by an imaginative vision, q. 175, a. 3, ad 1.
Had the gift of miracles, even without the necessity of previous prayer, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1.

PROPHECY:

A social charism which has for its purpose to instruct the human race in "everything necessary for salvation," q. 172, a. 1, ad 4; *EN* 10; pp. 61-62.
Is principally concerned with knowledge and involves speech or action only concomitantly, q. 171, a. 1; q. 173, a. 4.
Discloses to the mind truths which either necessarily or by reason of circumstances, surpass its natural ability for understanding, q. 171, a. 3; pp. 63-64.
Is not granted as a habitual state, q. 171, a. 2; pp. 75, 78.
The prophet is not necessarily aware of it, q. 171, a. 5; q. 173, a. 4; pp. 72-74.
Discloses only partial truths, q. 171, a. 4; q. 173, a. 4; pp. 74-75, 78.
Cannot be false, q. 171, a. 6.
True prophecy always has God for its author, even if it is given through the intermediary of angels or of demons, q. 172, a. 1, 2, and 5.
Does not enable the recipient to see the divine essence, q. 171, a. 2; q. 173, a. 1; q. 174, a. 5.
Necessarily involves the granting of a supernatural light; may also involve the infusion of new representations, q. 173, a. 2; *EN* 35; pp. 64-68.
Reveals not only supernatural truths, but also natural ones, q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2, ad 3; a. 3.
Is most especially concerned with the announcement of future events, q. 171, a. 3.
Most properly takes the form of imaginative visions, but can also be communicated by sensible or intellectual visions, q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2 and 3.
Tradition has made a distinction between prophecies of threat, of foreknowledge, and of predestination, q. 174, a. 1; *EN* 40.
Prophecy is found neither among the angels, nor the blessed, nor even, absolutely speaking, in Christ, q. 174, a. 5.
It has varied in the course of time, according to the particular stage in the progress of divine revelation, q. 174, a. 6.

RAPTURE:

An elevation of the soul toward supernatural realities, accomplished by the Spirit of God and accompanied by transport, q. 175, a. 1.
Involves both cognitive and affective powers, q. 175, a. 2.
Moses and St. Paul, in their raptures, saw the divine essence, q. 174, a. 5, ad 1; q. 175, a. 3; cf. MOSES, PAUL (ST.).

REPRESENTATIONS (SPECIES):

Prophecy normally, but not necessarily, involves the infusion or supernatural rearrangement of new representations, whether these be sensory, imaginative, or intelligible, q. 173, a. 2; *EN* 35; pp. 64-65.
Prophecy which enables its recipient to form supernatural judgments about naturally acquired truths is still prophecy, though of an inferior sort, q. 174, a. 2, ad 3; a. 3; pp. 65-68.

REVELATION:

Divine revelation is a genus the perfection of which is found only in heaven, and of which prophecy is an imperfect species, q. 171, a. 4, ad 2; *EN* 14; p. 74.
It has developed in the course of time, q. 174, a. 6.
Divine revelation closed with the end of the apostolic age; private revelations do not have the same social character and must submit to control, q. 174, a. 6, ad 3; *EN* 56.
Revelation enables the recipient to perceive divine realities; it is prepared for by an elevation of the mind or inspiration, q. 171, a. 1, ad 4; *EN* 5.
In modern usage, which is not the terminology of St. Thomas, this term is reserved for the case where the prophet receives infused supernatural representations, pp. 68-72.
Not everything in the Bible is revealed, but everything in it is inspired, pp. 91-100, 111-12, 127-29.

SAMUEL:

Summoned by Saul, his soul prophesied the latter's impending death, q. 174, a. 5, ad 4; *EN* 52.

SCRIPTURE:

Is inspired by God in all its parts, not only with regard to the thoughts, but also the words; this must be understood analogously and with a certain flexibility, pp. 91-92, 121-23, 127-29.
God is principal author; the hagiographer is also an author, pp. 98-100.

SENSES OF SCRIPTURE:

The primary sense is the primary object of scriptural inspiration; it is found everywhere and serves as the basis for all the other senses, pp. 147-49, 153-54.
There is only one primary sense properly so called; the plurality of which St. Augustine and St. Thomas spoke refers rather to secondary, adapted senses, pp. 148-49, 152, note 1.
The secondary senses, " fuller " and " typical, " are truly scriptural senses, even though their human author was not aware of them, pp. 149-51.
The " consequent " and " accommodated " senses are not properly scriptural, p. 152.

SIBYLS:

Made many true predictions concerning Christ, under the influence of divine inspiration, q. 172, a. 6, ad 1.

SPECIES:

See REPRESENTATIONS, VISIONS, LIGHT.

TONGUES, GIFT OF:

The normal complement of the gift of prophecy, q. 176, a. 2, ad 1.
Inferior to the gift of prophecy both by reason of its nature as well as of its object and its end, q. 176, a. 2.
Unlike prophecy, this gift could be possessed habitually and in its perfection, q. 176, a. 2, ad 3.
The Apostles and the first disciples of Christ were thereby able adequately to express themselves in every language, q. 176, a. 1.
To be distinguished from simple " glossolalia, " *EN* 72.

TRANSPORT:

Is absolutely required only if the prophet receives infused images, q. 173, a. 3; *EN* 39.
Disposes the soul more readily to perceive the influence of spiritual substances, q. 172, a. 1, ad 1.
Is one of the characteristics of rapture, q. 175, a. 1.

TRUTH OR FALSITY:

See INERRANCY, CONTINGENT FUTURES, DEMONS.

VISIONS:

The prophet does not see things in the divine essence, but only in created likenesses, q. 173, a. 1.
Prophetic visions can be of the intelligible, imaginative, or sensory order, q. 173, a. 2.
Only imaginative visions require transport, q. 173, a. 3.
Imaginative or sensory visions may come from demons, but not intellectual ones, q. 172, a. 5, ad 2.

WILL:

The will of the inspired subject receives its share of the influence of inspiration; it is moved efficaciously without ceasing to be free, pp. 120-21.

WORDS, GIFT OF:

The normal accompaniment of the charism of prophecy, q. 171, a. 1.
Enables the recipient to speak effectively, so as to instruct, please, and move his listeners, q. 177, a. 1.
Can be called the " word of wisdom " and the " word of knowledge, " but not the " word of faith, " q. 177, a. 1, ad 4.
Can be granted to women to address only private groups, not the public assemblies of the Church, q. 177, a. 2.

OUTLINE

FOREWORD 7
ABBREVIATIONS 11
PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION 13
PART I : EXPLANATORY NOTES 15
PART II : NOTES ON THOMISTIC DOCTRINE 61

A. *The Gift of Prophecy according to St. Thomas* 61
1. A Social Charism of Knowledge 61
2. It Discloses Hidden Truths 63
3. Lumen and Species 64
4. Lumen without Species 65
5. Inspiration and Revelation 68
A) Revelation 69
B) Inspiration 70
6. The Prophet's Awareness of His Gift 72
7. Perfections and Defects 74
8. The Instrumental Character of Prophetic Knowledge .. 77

B. *Scriptural Inspiration* 84
1. The Existence of Scriptural Inspiration 84
A) The Existence of Inspired Books 84
B) The Criterion of Scriptural Inspiration 86
2. The Nature of Inspiration 88
A) False Notions 88
B) Decisions of the Church's Magisterium 89
C) Cardinal Franzelin's Opinion 91
D) Principles of a Thomistic Solution 93
1) The Sacred Author as God's "Instrument" .. 94
2) The Divine Concurrence in the Thought of the Inspired Author 95
3) The Bible as the Work of Two Authors—A Divine and Human Book 98
4) The Question of Method 100
E) The Speculative and Practical Judgments—Prophetic and Scriptural Inspiration 103
1) The Speculative and Practical Judgments 103
2) The Prophet and the Sacred Writer 105
3) Revelation, Cognitive Inspiration, and Scriptural Inspiration 109
4) The Error by Excess 111

5) The Error by Defect 114
6) The Correct Solution 116
7) The Sacred Writer as an Instrument in the Strict Sense 118

3. The Extent of Inspiration 119
A) Inspiration Extends to all the Faculties of the Sacred Writer 119
1) Influence on the Will 120
2) Influence on the Executive Faculties 121
B) Inspiration Extends to All Who Took Part in the Composition of the Book 123
C) Inspiration Extends to the Entire Content of Holy Scripture 127

4. Inerrancy 132
A) A Result of Inspiration 132
B) Factors Which Determine the Truth of a Judgment 133
1) The Formal Object of the Judgment 134
2) The Quality of the Assent Given to the Judgment by the Person Who Makes It .. 134
3) The Reason for the Communication of the Judgment 135
C) Application of these Factors to Inspired Judgments 136
D) Role of the Practical Judgment in Inspired Judgments 142
E) The Theory of " Relative Truth " 143

5. Exegesis and Biblical Criticism 145
A) Textual Criticism 145
B) Literary Criticism 147
1) The Primary Sense 147
2) Secondary Senses 149
3) The Fuller and Typical Senses.. 150
4) Consequent and Accommodated Senses 152
5) The Value and Use of the Different Senses .. 153
6) Ecclesiastical Directives 154
C) Historical Criticism 155
1) The Theory of " Implicit Citations " 156
2) The Theory of " Historical Appearances " .. 157
3) The Theory of " Literary Types " 159
4) The Position of the Church 162
D) Rational Exegesis and the Rule of Faith 163

APPENDIX 169

BIBLIOGRAPHY 171

ANALYTICAL INDEX 175

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